AN ETHNOGRAPHIC DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVISM

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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MAY 2015

Acknowledgements

This dissertation marks ten years of a dream come true. It also marks the ten most difficult years of my life. I would not have succeeded without the following supporters along the way, and I am incredibly grateful for all of you.

I would like to thank my co-advisors, Teresa Gowan and Elizabeth Boyle, for helping me intellectually work through the entire process that is obtaining a PhD. I am honored to have benefited from your close attention to my work. Dr. Boyle is the first person I talked to about entering the program, so many years ago now, and I am honored that her inspiration has continued in my life to this day. Dr. Gowan started at the U of M as a professor the first year I started as a graduate student. I knew immediately that she was the one I needed to work with, gutsy-brilliant-intellectual-artist. I am also thankful for the insightful help of Michael Goldman, whose work inspired me greatly in my first year as a graduate student and has informed the trajectory of my own ethnography on a global topic. Barb Frey agreed to serve on my committee, even though I fell slightly outside her current scope of research, and I am so thankful to have benefitted from such an expert's eyes and thoughts on this topic. Carolyn Liebler also provided me with an important slice of encouragement and advice on writing and surviving this process. Doug Hartman pushed me, theoretically, in 2006 to think more contextually about sex trafficking – that was a key moment for me on this path.

I could not have finished this dissertation without the support, kindness and fellowship of my colleagues – those other graduate students who struggled and played alongside me. Rachael Kulick inspired me and her topic made my head zing with good thoughts. She encouraged me during many steps of my project and we talked weekly during the years I lived 1000 miles away. Her sociological (and other) advice grounded me regularly. I could not have done this without her companionship and friendship.

Wenjie Liao, Meg Krausch, Erika Busse, Heather Hlavka, Danielle Docka, Andria Strano, Kasia Polanska, Yu-Ju Chien, Susan Mlangwa, Shi-Rong Lee (Zotero!), Jasmine Trang Ha, Erin Hoekstra, Raphi Rechitsky, Jesse Wozniak, Sarah Whetstone, Joyce Bell, Tiffany Davis, Tim Ortyl, Donna Lybecker, Veronica Horowitz, Rob Stewart and so many more graduate students who came in and out of my life in the last ten years helped me stay sane and empowered me on many occasions to keep at it. Andria Strano, Maureen Clark, and Carolyn Chernoff all provided necessary guidance on drafts.

The administrative staff in the Department of Sociology has been amazing. I am so thankful for Ann Miller, Mary Drew, HildaViktoria Mork, Becky Drasin, Kerrie Deef, Hollis Schoonover, Bobbie Bryant (and Sarah, Yoonie and Eunice, long off to different ventures). Each of you provided much needed advice, guidance and support and even a welcome smile at various junctures.

Marianne Modica and Deb Valentine were my touchstones to being a grad student while living on the East Coast. Both provided spiritual, intellectual and emotional support while I tried to make things work so far from home. Marianne, you provided the whole family with a home away from home and you are, forever, family.

Heather and Lisa, Zeke and Danielle, Robert and Michael, Karen and Marie and so many others, you gave me the precious insight into a different kind of living and working. In my year working with you, I learned what it was like to be appreciated by, and to appreciate, a loving group of co-workers.

Kelly Rose Peay, Christine Tolsted, Cindy and Karl Pearson-Cater, Jean Skeels, Mary Fritsch – you are friends who supported me in various, necessary ways, often as cheerleader.

It is to the great gifts from my family that I now turn. I thank my entire family, both the one I was born into and the one I married into, but a few members get extra thanks. My grandmother Marilyn has always seen the brilliance in me and supported my education. Oh, how wonderful that always felt. My Gram B also saw something special in me and I wear her ring as a reminder of what a feminist can do and be. My parents, Carol and Bob, have cheered me on and helped us get groceries on more than one occasion. They both provided endless emotional support in this process which admittedly at times they did not understand but none the less, they supported me. My mother, at the end of these long ten years, traveled from Florida to Minnesota and watched the kids so I could power through to the end. That sacrifice of her time for me (the grandkids did factor in for her of course) will go down as one of the most caring acts ever done to and for me. And my dad, it is from him that I learned how to think critically about my social world – such an immeasurable gift. My in-laws, Bonnie and Jim, provided a level of support, financially and always emotionally, that makes me feel so safe and loved and also made it possible to finish this project. They opened their home to me, as a writing retreat, and it was with those precious secluded days that I was able to get to the point of a full draft. I will never forget the kindnesses of family and I'm so grateful for each and every one in my family. Keith, Kris, Anne-Marie, Bryan, Joe, Jack, Bennett, Maxwell, Morgan and Conor all cheered me on from afar and helped me celebrate in person.

Ever the sociologist, I contend that motherhood is socially constructed. I learned to be a mother in these last ten years and it is through my role as mother that I found a peace and grounding no credential can ever provide. Finn is my super hero, my Jedi knight, my sensei. Leo is my wise baby owl, the determined adventurous "outside" walker who has completed our family of four. I see more and feel more because of these two beautiful souls.

And my husband, Patrick, we did this together. We're still doing this together ("See you at Thanksgiving."). Married the year I started working on this PhD, I'm excited to see what our next ten years together brings. Let's make sure it includes a vacation to Disney

and many moments where, in the evening, we don’t know what to do, so we play cribbage (maybe even backgammon).

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the women of HOPE House.

Abstract

This dissertation uses discourse theory to understand anti-trafficking activism. A very specific discourse called Human Trafficking Discourse (HTD) depicts the problem of human trafficking as primarily sex trafficking and narrows the victims to women and children. This narrowing is due to an epistemic bedrock of patriarchal gender ideals which infuse the way activists, policy makers and the general public communicate about human trafficking. By first analyzing a series of speeches at the United Nations, I show how HTD is used strategically by international feminists as well as other high level policy makers. HTD, and discourse more generally, is not only words, however, so I follow HTD into a safe house for trafficked women where HTD disappears. Instead, the house relies on a discourse of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) linked with Catholicism and poverty management strategies. Like HTD, CSE relies on the same bedrock of traditional gender ideals. This reliance on traditional gender does not fit the reality of residents' lives, however. HTD, while it disappears in the house, reappears when the development committee seeks funding from the general public to maintain the house. HTD is highly present at the first gala the committee planned, and the presence of former residents of the house at the gala negated the tropes upon which HTD relies. Additionally, the founders themselves struggle against the money-making potential of HTD and remaining true to their project based on CSE. I conclude with three points. Though I originally asserted that HTD narrows "the victim" to women and children as distinct categories, based on my observations at the House's gala, in reality I find that HTD narrows "victims" to young, childlike women. Second, HTD should not be a strategy for feminist activism aimed at supporting trafficked women or women in sex work. Last, the concept of episteme is woefully under-utilized in discourse theory. It is through greater understanding of shared epistemic roots of various, sometimes seemingly contradictory discourses, that the power relations of society can be better identified, analyzed and altered.

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Introduction

Example of HTD

On November 6, 2011, Nicholas Kristof, a prominent social justice-minded columnist for the New York Times, and voice of many anti-trafficking activists, "live-tweeted" a brothel raid in a northern town in Cambodia. There with Somaly Mam, another prominent anti-trafficking figure who had been trafficked herself[1], Kristof tweeted, "Joining raid on brothel in Cambodia that imprisons young girls. Following @SomalyMam. Very tense" (2011). He described a militarized and forced entrance to a brothel guarded by "soldiers," in a series of "tweets" requiring less than 140 characters per message. Once the raid had occurred, he tweeted, "Social workers comforting the girls, telling them they are free, won't be punished, rapes are over." Then, he tells us, for his own safety, he must flee. In his column, five days later, Kristof expands on the raid and why it needed to be done. He writes,

> "It's partly because of grass-roots activists like Somaly, both in the United States and abroad, that human trafficking is increasingly recognized as a central human rights challenge. A U.N. agency estimates that more than 12 million people are engaged in forced labor, including sexual servitude. Another U.N. report has estimated that in Asia alone, 'one million children are involved in the sex trade under conditions that are indistinguishable from slavery,'" (Kristof 2011).

[1] Mam resigned from the Somaly Mam foundation in 2014 after inconsistencies in her own story of trafficking and abuse were identified by various sources in the press. The inconsistencies make her origin story look less like the ideal type of human trafficking as it is presented by her organization and the press, and more like a complicated life of poverty and sex work; at times her experience was forced and at other times provided her freedoms and eventually "a way out." The Foundation closed in late 2014 without her leadership.

For Kristof, the ending is optimistic. He writes,

> "The soldiers backed down, but, in the end, the army officer was not charged. The woman, who had more day-to-day involvement in managing the girls, is expected to be prosecuted, and the brothel presumably will now be out of operation. The girls were placed in a shelter run by Somaly, and they are receiving plenty of love from other girls previously extricated from sexual slavery.
>
> That's how the battle against human trafficking is being fought around the world. Ultimately, the way to end this scourge is to make it less profitable and more risky for the traffickers. Above all, that means targeting not the girls but putting traffickers and pimps in jail, whether in Cambodia or in New York.
>
> Slowly, that is happening. I can see the progress here in Cambodia, where 10-year-old girls were openly for sale when I began reporting on forced prostitution. Now they're still sold, but fewer of them, and more discreetly — and traffickers are going to jail. There may well be prostitution a century from now, but we don't have to accept 12-year-olds being raped until they get AIDS.
>
> In the 19th century, the world conquered traditional slavery. And in this century, with leaders like Somaly, we can emancipate the victims of human trafficking," (Kristof 2011)

Human trafficking[2] is a much more expansive and complicated social problem than how it is represented via Kristof's words above (UN 2009, DHS 2009). While he

[2] The United States State Department defined trafficking thus in 2013 Trafficking Persons Report: "'Trafficking in persons' and 'human trafficking' have been used as umbrella terms for the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-386), as amended, and the Palermo Protocol describe this compelled service using a number of different terms, including involuntary servitude, slavery or practices similar to slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor. Human trafficking can include but does not require movement. People may be considered trafficking victims regardless of whether they were born into a state of servitude, were transported to the exploitative situation, previously consented to work for a trafficker, or participated in a crime as a direct result of being trafficked. At the heart of this phenomenon is the traffickers' goal of exploiting and enslaving their victims and the myriad coercive and deceptive practices they use to do so" (United States 2013).

briefly opens the parameters of the issue to include forced labor, he then closes the boundaries of what he's writing about immediately and brings the reader with him, back to the issue of sex trafficking of girls. Human trafficking, however, includes not just sex trafficking but trafficking for other forms of labor as well. For example, in addition to sex trafficking, trafficking in persons has been documented in the global construction industry, in agriculture, in mining, for begging purposes, and for war-making. Furthermore, trafficking is not a fixed experience, and that makes it difficult to distinguish from smuggling. It is experienced fluidly; the exact moments between consent and force are often not precise (Mahdavi and Sargent 2011). Additionally, human trafficking is heralded as a global "scourge" (UN 2000, Kristof 2011) while its cousin, human smuggling which might look exactly like human trafficking except for a legally precise element of "consent," is classified as victimless. Further adding to the confusion of what human trafficking is, most, if not all, statistics regarding the prevalence and types of human trafficking are circumspect (Tyldum and Brunovskis 2005, UN 2009) so it is not possible to capture the true parameters of human trafficking. However, Kristof cites un-nuanced UN statistics as if they capture the real story. They may, but even the UNODC recognizes that their statistics on trafficking are circumspect.

In a sense, Kristof ignores the fact that human trafficking is a very complicated phenomenon. Instead, Kristof represents human trafficking in a very simplified yet precise way. In the example above, Kristof frames trafficking with references to young women/girls providing sex for money in brothels in Cambodia against their will. For Kristof, these women are tragic victims – young girls who need to be rescued, loved, and

saved by well-meaning activists, social workers and government sanctioned law enforcement. If not saved, at least the girls are hidden from his view via more discreet transactions. The "girls" of Kristof's experiences and imagination are never agents and are wholly helpless.

Kristof tweeted, "Social workers comforting the girls, telling them they are free, won't be punished, rapes are over" (2011). Although he indicates to his audience that exploitation is over for the girls, he cannot know this. For his own "safety," he tweeted, he had to flee moments later. Unfortunately, history would tell a conflicting story to Kristof's assumptions that the girls are saved and the rapes are over. For example, raids on brothels in Cambodia are not empirically proven to be efficacious. Indeed, some credible sources assert the opposite is true. The non-governmental organization (NGO), Human Trafficking Center noted that, "[a]fter 37 girls were rescued in a 2003 raid in Svay Pak, Cambodia, at least twelve of those rescued ran away from the shelter, some of them reappearing in brothels. A police raid in Svay Pak a year later rescued the same number of girls, and within days, all had fled the shelter" (Thrupkaew 2009).[3]

One year prior to the raid that Kristof participated in, a well known human rights organization, Human Rights Watch (HRW 2010), urged the Cambodian government to pay closer attention to the mass abuses, including extortion and beatings, by Cambodian police against sex workers in Phnom Penh, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, and Siem Reap. Long before Kristof and Mam publicized their raid of a brothel in 2011, that included Cambodian police, it was already known among less visible activists on the

[3] I do not present this information as any "more true" than the information that Kristof provides as I am not an expert on human trafficking in Cambodia. Instead, I present it to show that Kristof's account is not the only orientation to the subject.

ground in Cambodia that the police were part of the problem that makes up exploitation of sex workers in Cambodia. With this information, then, it seems that a police raid might be an ill-conceived solution to help individuals who wish to remove themselves from prostitution. This could result in further traumatization, abuse and experiences of precarity for the individuals in the brothel in Cambodia. By imagining that sex work can only be forced prostitution, Kristof's solutions to fix the problem of human trafficking, and his conceptualization of what human trafficking is in the first place, are woefully incomplete and potentially harmful.[4]

Kristof and the raid he reported could very well be part of the problem rather than a solution to human trafficking, as he purports it is. But how did Kristof get to that moment? Is Kristof alone in his desire to rescue young, trafficked girls? Why does Kristof want to rescue the girls in the first place?[5] Why doesn't Kristof consider all of the other data which suggests brothel raids are, at the very least, ineffective, and worst, just as abusive as the working conditions themselves?

At least in part, the answers to these questions lie in Kristof's approach to the issue of human trafficking which appears to be heavily informed by a specific discourse

[4] There is enough evidence suggesting that there is a problem of exploitative prostitution of children in Cambodia and I applaud informed endeavors to aid all peoples experiencing exploitation. However, using sex workers of Cambodia as representative of the entire issue of human trafficking is problematic, as I will show in this chapter.

[5] Caring for the plight of women and girls, as Kristof does, is not a terrible thing. As I write in 2015, the United Nations gathers for its yearly Commission on the Status of Women and, yet again, the high prevalence of *violence against women* is the focus of their work. "[R]ape, murder and sexual harassment… remain stubbornly high in countries rich and poor, at war and at peace. The United Nations' main health agency, the World Health Organization, found that 38 percent of women who are murdered are killed by their partners" (Sengupta 2015). This dissertation isn't an attempt to dispel concerns about the gendering of violence. Rather, I am concerned that evidence-based solutions to the problem of labor exploitation, including sexual labor, are missed due to the limited discourse utilized to explain and understand human trafficking.

on human trafficking, what I call Human Trafficking Discourse (HTD). HTD blinds him and many others to real voices and experiences of people who do not fit the parameters of HTD, from the understanding of the problem to the prescribed solutions.[6] This dissertation maps the parameters of HTD and seeks to understand how HTD, as discourse, is mobilized, becomes manifest in various sites of anti-trafficking activism, and is taken up by various actors while resisted by others. I devote the rest of this chapter to providing a definition of discourse, identifying the parameters of HTD, discussing some implications of HTD as the dominant discourse on the issue of human trafficking, and closing with a description of my project: the methods and chapter outline for the dissertation.

Discourse as Theory

In its most generic sense, discourse is literally words and the actions that emerge from those words. These words are spoken, written and thought. However, words themselves are not the full picture of discourse when it is conceptualized as a theoretical tool to understand social action. This is because what people say or write and what they do are sometimes very different. Thus, the manifestation of the words, like actions which stem from or do not stem from the words, must also be considered. Discourse is what is "able" to be said and done. Thus, discourse is also in the silences and what is not said and what is not done are just as important as the actual utterances themselves (Mills 2004).

[6] There is some evidence that the United States government is successfully expanding their scope of trafficking, since 2009, as can be witnessed via the Department of Homeland Security's anti-trafficking website, "Blue Campaign." However, the textual presence of an expanded definition of trafficking is not sufficient to prove that it is indeed, expanding. I will address a comparison of text to speech and actions in greater depth in Chapter two.

To understand the parameters of discourse, it is necessary to note the gaps in speech and action which are sometimes actively prevented, other times completely unthinkable.

Discourse is not just a linguistic concept, discourse is a tool of social power (Foucault 1978, Mills 2004). Discourse orders our thoughts, which in turn orders our speech. This ordering of ideas is not a benign process (Mills 2004). Social power is maintained through the control of knowledge, where knowledge sets the parameters of truth. Speech and actions of society are ordered in a cyclical pattern, each reinforcing the other as seemingly natural. Marlene Spanger, a Danish scholar of human trafficking, calls this "truth producing logic" (Spanger1: 520). Stuart Hall describes the cyclical process in this way:

> Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas can be put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others (2001: 72).

In other words, "reality" in society is filtered through discourse. What can be problematic about this social process is that while discourse on one hand aids in giving meaning to things, on the other hand it restricts what meanings are allowable. Social power is infused into the process: marginalized experiences are outside the parameters of a discourse; subaltern groups' experiences are at times banned from, or at least ignored within, the discourse. In this way, discourse determines what society deems important and, furthermore, true.

Due to the truth-producing logic of discourse, identifying silences and power within discourse requires a systematic excavation of speech and action. Building on

Gowan's "elements of discourse" (2015), I break the mythos of discourse down into the following interrelated elements: the *objects* of the discourse, the *subjects* in as well as made through the discourse, the *causes* of the current state of the discourse, the *ideal-type strategies* to deal with the current state of the discourse, the *tropes* or narratives which represent the discourse, and, at the root, the *epistemes* which are the belief-based foundation of the discourse.

While the mythos of discourse is the "ideal type" of the phenomenon that the discourse represents, there is also "discourse in action" or, the *discursive field*. The discursive field where the discourse is materializes. Discursive fields are less pure than the discourse itself due to a maneuvering of various experiences that also impact the phenomenon. For this reason, the discursive field is messier than discourse as mythos and results in hybrid forms of the discourse as it plays out with and in lived realities. For example, the discursive field for this research project is the management and response to human trafficking as a phenomenon of concern. This includes the activism, policies and services designed to help eradicate trafficking and to deal with its consequences. This discursive field is a key site for understanding how the relationship between discourse and forms of social power materialize in that I am interrogating moments where a discourse of human trafficking becomes institutionalized. As I will show, the institutionalization of HTD elevates some voices while silencing others. Once the parameters of a discourse are identified, it is then possible to consider aspects of a given phenomenon which do not fit within the parameters. It is here, at these sites of friction

(Tsing 2005) and exposed silence where the power dynamics of discourse become audible.

For example, Human Trafficking as a discourse, and as different from a wider phenomenon of human trafficking, came to my attention early in my research. In 2006, the issue of human trafficking was relatively new to me. The imaginary of human trafficking conjured up images of terrifying sex slavery and my first forays into learning about it via internet and news related searches left me wholly focused on that subset of human trafficking oriented to the market in sexual services – "sex trafficking." Further, the "reality" that was presented to me via media sources was that trafficked victims were young and beautiful, often tragically abducted, and forcefully pimped for sexual services. When not being held in intensely depraved situations, they were still imprisoned behind doors in anonymous apartments. Having lived in Latvia during the fall of the Soviet Union where I witnessed first hand the incredibly difficult poverty in the following years, I imagined women who looked just like me and my friends trapped in brothels. Like most Western women, I consumed HTD within the parameters of knowledge upon which I had to draw.

The imagery and the limitations of what I first perceived as "human trafficking" was difficult to push against, but I found greater nuance regarding the issue when I attended a summer university course in 2006 in Copenhagen, Denmark that purported to teach about "human trafficking" in the mornings and "prostitution" in the afternoons. Still unaware that human trafficking was far more than just sex trafficking, I set out to learn the difference. Six weeks later, on the last day of classes, I wandered the streets of

Copenhagen to escape from a classroom that elevated a very narrow version of human trafficking as truth, in spite of regular, conflicting evidence presented by guest speakers and fieldtrips. The majority of the course attendees, all young women from the United States, were sucked in, hook, line and sinker. The teachers, whose regular jobs were with Save the Children International, unabashedly pushed an emotive, uncritical stance of trafficking as synonymous with prostitution and my growing critical lens was met with veiled hostility. On that last day, the teachers had us line up on an imaginary line, one end being "legalize prostitution" and the other being "criminalize purchasers of sex." Most of the students and teachers stood as far away from the "legalize" side of the line as possible while I was the sole attendee standing off the line, for I found it problematic, but closer to "legalize." Frustrated by my lack of community, I went for a walk. How, I wondered, could all of that evidence we had seen firsthand[7] and that revealed the experience of human trafficking to be incredibly complicated, be ignored?

My walk took me away from the dominant discourse being taught at an American sponsored university program by Danish anti-trafficking activists and into a very different space. Wandering the narrow streets of a hip Copenhagen neighborhood, I stopped at a quirky wig shop I'd passed with curiosity many times. I almost passed it again that day, but curiosity won out. I descended the old stone stairs into a garden level shop empty of customers. A tall blonde woman approached, introduced herself as

[7] For example, we spent time with sex worker organizations and former sex workers who had been trafficked. These groups and individuals asserted that criminalization was not helpful but rather pushed the plight of migrant sex workers into far greater invisibility. Also, we had spoken with another woman who showed us how sex trafficking was a subset of a broader issue of labor trafficking and she'd asserted that we needed to utilize a broader lens when constructing strategies to deal with "human trafficking" which would account for labor exploitation.

Kristina, and inquired if she could help me. We started chatting and eventually came to the reason I was in Copenhagen – to study human trafficking and prostitution. She asked me many questions – what the difference was, how I felt about it. Eventually, rapport established, I told her of my frustration with the polarization of the course. To my surprise, Kristina said she was pleased to hear of my frustrations, and then she proceeded to tell me of her experiences as a transsexual sex worker. The wig shop, which had nothing to do with sex work, was her now-actualized dream, but it was sex work that provided for her and her daughter, and had even afforded them a summer home.

My hour with Kristina taught me some valuable lessons about the conflation of human trafficking and prostitution. Kristina was not a victim, nor did she "need" rehabilitation; she was able to construct a life of which she was proud and a career that made her happy. She wanted to make it clear to me that she had done well for herself and her family, and this was because of her years as a sex worker. Kristina was more fortunate than some. The shopkeeper lived in a country where sex work was legal so she was not driven underground and her citizenship afforded her all the benefits of citizens in that social democracy. She transitioned into a different career once she felt financially able to do so. She expressed no regret over the career that brought her to this point.[8] Further, my hour with Kristina taught me about the social power in discourse. The instructors of my summer course testified at the UN on the issue of human trafficking. Kristina did not.

[8] With the intense stigmatization that comes with being a sex worker in general, combined with the outright illegality of sex work in most nation-states, Kristina's experience is not the global norm. Instead, many sex workers are stigmatized and marginalized; the supports of society remain outside their grasp.

Human Trafficking Discourse (HTD)

The majority of human trafficking activism, and much of the international and US law addressing human trafficking, is embedded within a very precise discourse[9] which I call Human Trafficking Discourse (HTD). While many social scientists recognize a relationship between discourse and representations of human trafficking, I seek here to bring much of the contemporary research together. My dissertation research places me directly in the discursive field of human trafficking activism. First, however, the bulk of this chapter will delimit HTD and its contents, based on findings from other social scientists who study human trafficking. By considering the social scientific literature, which is in conversation with the mythos of discourse, I am able to identify the parameters of HTD that I then bring to bear against the discursive field of HTD in the rest of this study. It must be noted that due to the complexity of human trafficking as a phenomenon, as well as how complex groups of social actors engage with the entire field of human trafficking, HTD as constructed here is an ideal type. I am not describing human trafficking in this section, I am describing a trend in how human trafficking is represented in public and governmental discourse per other social scientific work on the issue. After comparing what social scientists claim are the objects and subjects of the discourse, I then compare how social scientists critique discourse-laden causes and strategies of the discourse and identify a core trope and its corollary, the sex slave. Once I have presented these elements of the discourse, I then identify epistemes which undergird the discourse and identify some key agents of discourse and their sites of

[9] See Spanger2 for an additional in-depth, historical analysis of human trafficking as discourse.

production. I close with a short discussion of how HTD may appear confusing and even inaccurate, but also aids me in understanding my own research.

Discourse as Mythos

Objects/Subjects

US culture relies heavily on oppositions as makers of meaning and when seeking discourse, it is efficacious to consider the objects and subjects of discourse in relationship to each other. Objectification, in the parameters of discourse, entails lack of agency for the object. Objects can be identified via passive verbs to express action regarding the object or if a suspected object is devoid of verbs and denied agentic practices in the first place. In the case of HTD, the primary object is "victims" who are forced into servitude and unable to alter their fate. The subjects of HTD, on the other hand, are those individuals or entities that are accorded agency within the discourse or who construct their own subjective selves through the discourse. For example, in HTD, agency is accorded to nation-states, traffickers and purchasers of trafficked persons. Subjective selves emerge via activists and other concerned entities seeking to address the problem of human trafficking.

Subjects and objects in HTD are specifically gendered. Women and girls are constructed as more apt to be victimized than men or boys, and further, men are discursively constructed more often as traffickers or agents fleeing poverty under constrained choices (Lobasz 2012). Beyond an assumption that men are the traffickers, a further male gendering of subjectification occurs: the public realm, the white, male-centric nation-state (Collins, Patricia Hill 2001), is upheld in HTD as the primary tool for protecting potential and actual victims of human trafficking. Utilizations of HTD

overwhelmingly adhere to criminalization (a strategy which will be discussed in depth below) which entails state apparatuses to keep human trafficking from happening at the borders and to punish traffickers once trafficking has occurred.

An additional oft noted "subject" in HTD, which counters the neat gender division of HTD whereby women are objects and men are agents, is privileged activists, many of whom are first world, white women searching for professional opportunities (Agustin 2007, Spanger 2011, Doezema 2010, Grewal 2005, Halley 2006, Bernstein 2012, Eisenstein 2009, Jeffrey 2002, Ho 2005, Desai 2005). The subjectification of a subset of women, privileged ones, potentially deflects from an otherwise intense feminization of the victims of human trafficking.

The objectification of women and girls within HTD is significant because manifestations of HTD - law and social services – are narrowed thus, and limit the overall problem of human trafficking in two ways. First, by narrowing the victim to women, a very deep belief of the essential nature of sex and gender map onto the notion of victim, making the victim seem naturally feminized.[10] In other words, the fluidity of woman-ness and of victimization are both obscured. Further, because victimization is fixed in HTD, the only answer can be rescue of women. Victims cannot help themselves; they must be saved.[11] Here we see the logic of discourse as a theoretical construct at work because if it represents women victims in need of rescue but obscures male victims in need of rescue, the conflation of women to victim is easy to make.

[10] This is a large part of the epistemic roots which inform the discourse. It is discussed in depth in the section "Epistemic Roots" below.

[11] A fairly constant remark in trainings devised to help law enforcement or service providers identify victims includes the phrase "They might not know they are victims."

Second, a heightened focus on women as sexual objects is discursively linked to a heightened focus on sex trafficking. In this way, users of HTD narrow human trafficking to one subset, sex trafficking because other forms of trafficking such as domestic labor, are less compelling. The social power of discourse is brought into view with regards to this process of narrowing: a narrowed focus on sex trafficking leads to less attention being paid to other, non-sexualized but still exploitative labor processes.

Causes and Ideal-type Strategies

Like objects and subjects in a discourse, the causes and strategies of a given discourse, too, are more easily analyzed in relationship to each other. To identify causes, one seeks information within the identified discursive field regarding circumstances which users of the discourse purport to have led to the current state of the objects and subjects of the discourse. To identify strategies, one looks for suggestions present in the discursive field for how to manage the problem or situation present in the discourse.

Within the discursive field of human trafficking, the causes of human trafficking are often invoked as a mixture of macro- and individual-level forces including poverty, immigration practices, the immorality and greed of traffickers, and bad families who cast their children out to fend for themselves, or worse, sell them. HTD-informed strategies include punishing traffickers, protecting victims of trafficking, and preventing trafficking in the first place (UN 2000). These strategies are often referred to as "the three Ps." While the prevention element of these strategies could potentially link back to macro-level forces, in practice all three strategies rely on the paternalism of law enforcement and policy (Blanchette and Silva 2013). Instead of looking for ways to decrease vulnerability, for example through analyzing supports available to the potentially

vulnerable, and clearly defined exits which would include other job opportunities and other resources (Horning 2013), the strategy of criminalization in HTD focuses instead on what to do after physical violence or human trafficking has occurred rather than meaningfully addressing root causes which create vulnerabilities prior to moments of trafficking. Indeed, the macro-level causes of human trafficking, what activists often term "push" factors, disappear when mobilizers of HTD assert their strategies to deal with human trafficking.

For example, a key solution to eradicating human trafficking is to strengthen national borders, and if the borders are breeched, to send the undocumented home. In the United States, only those individuals experiencing "extreme" trafficking will be issued a U.S. T-visa – a visa which will allow the victim to stay in the United States for a period of 4 years. However, very few individuals are accorded a T-visa; therefore repatriation of the trafficked person or unwillingness to seek the visa in the first place is common (DHS 2009).[12] Conceptualizing home as a safe haven is a key element of the episteme undergirding HTD, as I will show below. What is important here, though, is that repatriation to "home" and a reliance on policed and tight borders which keeps vulnerable people "home" completely disregards the role that macro-level push factors play in

[12] The Department of Homeland Security (2009) reviewed the T-Visa process and found it to be slow and ineffective. Based on recommendations from an internal investigation, they sought to streamline the process and help fill some of the gaps which made the T-Visa so difficult to obtain. The cap for a T-Visa is 5000 a year (not including family members) and while, in 2008, 471 T-Visas were approved, by 2014 the number of approved T-Visas had more than doubled to 1401 approvals in 2014 alone. This is still much lower than the cap, but it is a remarkable increase. Additionally, the US also began a U-Visa program in 2008 in which petitioners are required to show abuse rather than extreme trafficking, and has become an additional type of Visa that survivors of trafficking may seek if they are trafficked into the United States. There are no published numbers on the number of U-visa given to trafficked individuals, though in 2013 over 30,000 U-Visas were granted (DHS 2009). No matter the visa, however, the holder of the visa is required, to the best of their ability, aid in the identification and prosecution of their trafficker(s).

creating vulnerable people. In this way, one of the core causes of human trafficking is pushed into the background via criminalization.

International borders are breeched, over and over, by traffickers and vulnerable people, as well as via other forms of "assisted migration." By conceptualizing the border as symbolic rather than material, the specter of human trafficking comes to represent a disruption to social order more generally (Segrave 2009). Marie Segrave notes,

> "[u]nderstanding trafficking as arising from a number of complex conditions and issues challenges both the narrow identification of trafficking as sexual exploitation and the logic of the law and order policy response that essentially begins and ends at the border of the receiving country. It suggests that there is a mismatch between the commitment to eradicate trafficking, to support victims and efforts implemented to enable such outcomes. As trafficked women are most often also illegal non-citizens, order is restored through the twin processes of prosecution and the repatriation of women home, that is, to where they belong. The complex needs and desires of those who have been trafficked are effectively written out of this narrative" (2009: 255).

Segrave suggests that is it a symbolic border which figures more heavily into proposed "solutions" to trafficking. Interviewing individuals involved in the border regimes of two nation-states, Thailand and Australia, Segrave finds that public servants in charge of maintaining the borders see these same borders as fluid, and repatriation as temporary. However, due to the need to reestablish *social* order, the reestablishing of the border over and over, via repatriation, remains the ineffective end-game of "rectifying" the problem of human trafficking which is not the trafficking itself but rather the reestablishing of social order where the nation-state determines said order.

A scholar of sex work and trafficking, Julia O'Connell Davidson (2010) claims that not only is there a schism between causes and strategies, but that adherence to HTD obscures this schism, placing blame for the problem away from poverty and inequality and onto a foil: the morality of individual traffickers. She writes,

> "[d]ominant discourse on 'trafficking' detaches the restriction and economic exploitation experience by some groups of migrants from its basis in the global political and economic inequalities that simultaneously generate migratory pressures and set in place barriers to migration, and from the immigration regimes that make some legal as well as some irregular migrants vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. State-sponsored violence against migrants, and the forcible restrictions placed on migrants' freedom of movement and choices by immigration regimes, is invisible in discourse on trafficking. Our attention focuses instead on the individual morality of 'traffickers' and other 'exploiters', and on the 'uncivilized' and 'corrupt' cultures that tolerate slavery" (2010: 257).

Here we see a suggestion of the power dynamic, also supported by other scholars, which is embedded in HTD - an obfuscation of the role of the (neoliberal) state in causing vulnerability in the first place (Bernstein 2012, Limoncelli 2009).

The Trope: Beautiful Dead Sex Slave

In the realm of discourse, a trope is an easily recognizable representation of the discourse. Its reference conjures up an instant recognition of the thing it is representing for the majority of people consuming the trope. A trope entails an emotive response as well. For example, when seeking images for the terms "human trafficking" via the search engine "Google" on March 20, 2015, the following images were at the top of the list of hits:

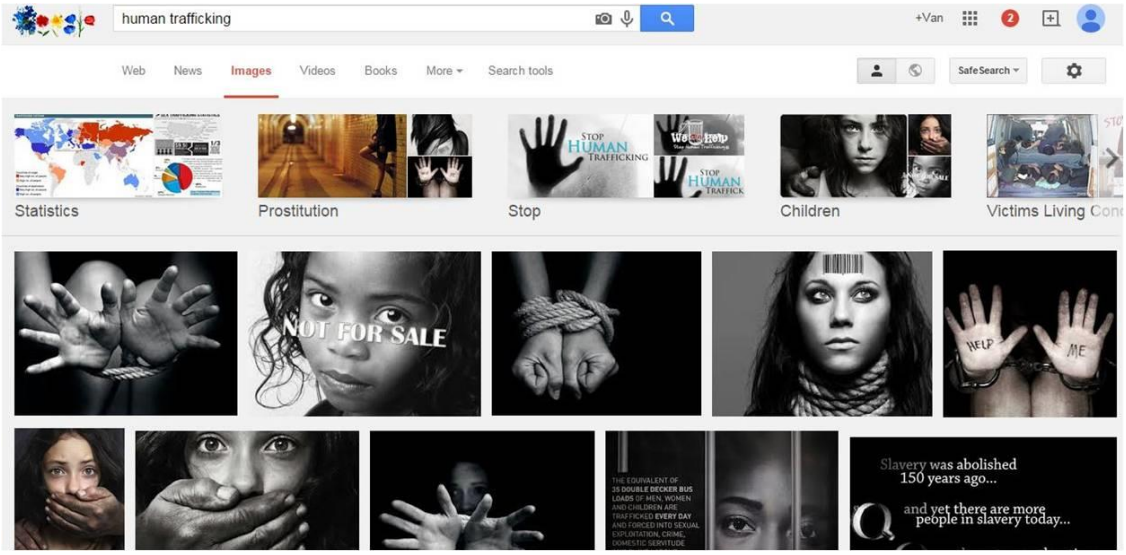

Figure 1: Google Search "human trafficking" (images option)

The contemporary tropes of HTD look a lot like tropes utilized at the turn of the 19th century, when "white slavery" captured national imaginations (Doezema 1999). The tropes utilized over 100 years ago include "violated femininity, shattered innocence, and the victimization of 'womenandchildren'" (Bernstein 2012: 243) and, as is visible in the image above, are again a primary trope used to represent the issue today.

An oft-utilized trope of HTD is of a helpless girl, abandoned or sold by her family, into sex slavery. Beyond the example that Kristof's brothel bust gives us, there are many more examples. Used as an awareness tool in Eastern Europe in the early 2000s, the film *Lilja 4ever* (2002) depicts this trope aptly. Lilja, based on a true story, was a poor teen girl living in Estonia. Her mother had left her behind when she migrated to the US and Lilja's only extended family, an aunt, displaced Lilja to disgusting living conditions and to fend for herself. Lilja learned from a friend how to get paid for sexual services– though she refused to do so herself at first. However, eventually with society

against her from all sides, she takes money for sex. She vomits after her first experience with sex work, but then is shown proudly purchasing food as well as a gift for another essentially parent-less adolescent in the neighborhood. Lest she be secure about her agency as a sex worker, she is then courted by a nice young man who promises her a job in Sweden on a farm. Travelling willingly and with hope to Sweden, she is then divested of her forged passport, locked in an apartment and driven to John after John where she is raped over and over. Lilja eventually kills herself by jumping off a bridge after escaping her trafficker.

Lilja's story became the epitome of HTD in Eastern Europe. A beautiful young girl, Lilja's innocence and youth was stolen from her by a family who abandoned her and a "boyfriend" who really wasn't a boyfriend at all. Lilja isn't alone, though. The fictionalized movie looks a great deal like the cautionary tale of the death of Kani Sherpa, a young girl trafficked to the Middle East from Nepal (O'Neill 2001), or the death of Brittany Clardy (Horner 2014), namesake of a new shelter for trafficked girls, in St. Paul, MN.

Furthermore, Lilja's story has been widely used as an awareness tool to teach other young girls in Eastern Europe about the perils of sex trafficking. Sweden distributed 500 copies of the film to non-profits in Eastern Europe in 2005 (Small 2012). Additionally, the International Office on Migration holds the distribution rights to the film in Moldova, a country extremely hard hit by poverty following the end of the USSR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that over 60,000 Moldovans have viewed the film which serves as a warning for young women seeking to

migrate rather than serving as a tool to help young women migrate with agency (Small 2012).

Embedded in Lilja's story is the trope of the slave or more specifically, the sex-slave (FitzGerald 2012, Doezema 2010). In an analysis of anti-trafficking imagery from the recent anti-trafficking movement, Zoe Trodd finds that the 'slavery' imagery utilized in anti-trafficking campaign materials invoke paternalism, dehumanization and sensationalization, and mirror the exact same themes found in prior analyses of the first anti-slavery movement in the 1800s (2013). As noted above, this is not surprising because this trope can be discursively tied to the early 20th century concerns of "White slavery." Slavery is a potent trope and invokes strong, negative emotions. It incites a moral disgust that the majority of "Western" society would never publically support (Musto 2009, O'Connell Davidson 2010).

Episteme

Discourse, in general, is a mechanism for asserting power, as well as a materialization of that power. For Foucault, however, there is a deeper level of power informing the discourse: that of the episteme. A Foucauldian episteme determines which power relations are furthered via the discursive process (Foucault 1970). The concept of episteme explains why one discourse can gain overwhelming footing in a social space because an episteme is a core epistemological and ontological foundation of a given culture, and this foundation organizes social relations.

Combining identification of the objects, subjects, causes, strategies and tropes of HTD, two core and interrelated epistemes emerge. First is an underlying belief that

gender is essential and thus natural and fixed, rather than fluid. Women are victimizable because they are women, and vice versa. This specific belief about "womanness" as vulnerable bleeds into the second episteme undergirding HTD that women, due to their vulnerability, belong in the care of patriarchal structures: family and state. As Hua and Nigorazawa (2012) exemplify in their research, HTD depicts women as helpless and unable to ever know their choices, if they are not the choices reinforcing "heteronormative and patriarchal ideals of female sexuality" (408).

Elizabeth Bernstein theorizes why this episteme of home as safe haven occurs. As the neoliberal state takes more and more social supports from its citizens, the family is that place where these supports will ideally be taken up. "Feminist family values" are a key component to this process. In fact, other versions of feminism have fallen by the wayside. She notes,

> "Contemporary feminist commitment to both "family values" and to a law and order agenda are facilitated by a neoliberal state apparatus in which poor as well as middle class lives are increasingly governed through social support… Rather than pursuing materially redistributive strategies, the versions of feminism that have survived and thrived are those that deploy the mutually reinforcing sexual carceral strategies that a reconfigured neoliberal state is likely to support." Bernstein 2012: 254.

For Bernstein, it is the trope of the sexual predator, including traffickers, which locates the general public's fears outside their homes while also making the home an ideal haven from public fears. Users of HTD in the last two decades ushered in a new sort of sexual predator and pushed the state's feminist-infused rationale for criminalizing any form of sexuality which countered "safe sexuality" – sexuality which occurred in egalitarian, loving relationships. Unsafe sexuality was for recreation, or worse, economic gain. For

Bernstein, feminists espousing egalitarianism wind up unintentionally carrying the neoliberal state's message that family is a safe haven, and reinforcing that venturing into public space is always risky for women.

Discourse in Action: Agents and Sites of Production

What social scientists know about human trafficking varies greatly from HTD (Agustin 2007, Coghlan et al 2011, Doezema 2010, Gould 2011, Isgro et al 2013, Kempadoo 2005, Molland 2010, Munro 2006, Segrave 2009, Snajdr 2013, Spanger 2013, Van der Pijl et al 2011, Van Liempt 2011).[13] However, because discourse has truth producing logics, the very data which opens up the categories of human trafficking to include men as victims, address trafficking in other forms of work, show women as traffickers and treat the selling sex as an agentic enterprise are not part of HTD.

I conceptualize discourse as a vehicle through which deeper epistemes are communicated to society. The agents of the discourse and the sites of production, then, are people and their products (products such as legal policy, nation-states, journalism) that consume, utilize and incorporate HTD into their actions. Discourse requires agents. For example, the discursive field of human trafficking, as it is constructed today, looks very different from the way that the International Labor Organization (ILO) defined it in 1994. At that time, the ILO defined human trafficking thus: money changes hands, a facilitator is involved, an international border is crossed, the entry is illegal and the movement is voluntary (Laczko 2005). In 1994, then, a large, influential international NGO conceptualized that smuggling and human trafficking were the same thing. Five

[13] This list of citations includes only research studies which gathered their own empirical data. The scope of this list's research subjects is global.

years later, in 1999, the UN constructed a new international law for human trafficking in which smuggling would be separated out from the notion of trafficking in persons. Smuggling was then conceptualized as a genderless and victimless crime, much like the description of trafficking that the ILO put forth in 1994, and human trafficking in international law moved closer to HTD[14]. In fact, HTD was concertedly mobilized and made manifest in international law (Doezema 2005, Doezema 2010).[15] Agents of HTD include the general public (e.g. activists and individuals consuming media) and governments (e.g., but not limited to, the US, the UK, the UN).

First, the general public assists in driving the discourse. The recent interest in human trafficking has all the components of a moral panic (Weitzer 2007) and the general US public readily consumes stories of human trafficking (limited often to HTD) via movies, news and other forms of media. HTD is incredibly successful with the general public because it is often sensational and feeds on fears of social change, including fears of fluid constructions of sex and gender (Levy and Jakobsson 2013, van Liempt 2014, Chapkis 2003). Though it is recently becoming common for more activists to use the term "survivor," I found that those activists utilizing counter discourses of human trafficking[16] were more apt to utilize the term "survivor" rather than "victim" in describing individuals deemed to be trafficked. However, a "survivor" doesn't seem to capture the social imagination like a victim, as can be evidenced in the very specific trope

[14] This is not surprising. HTD has strong historical roots in international law. This will be explored in chapter two.
[15] See Jo Doezema's description of the process of HTD inclusion in international law in "Now You See Her, Now You Don't: Sex Workers at the UN Trafficking Protocol Negotiation" in *Social and Legal Studies* (2005) as well as her book, *Sex Slaves and Discourse Masters* (2010).
[16] The most common counter discourse to HTD is one which promotes decriminalization of sex work with the theory that if prostitution is legal, then the sellers of sex will have more solid grounding through which to assert their rights.

of dead young women, which emerge from usage of HTD again and again in media and awareness campaigns (O'Brien 2012, Andrijasevic 2007). Public consumption of a sensationalized HTD, like following the live tweeting of Nicholas Kristof as he tags along on a brothel bust in Cambodia, is meant to draw on emotion but as a result it led to a concealment of the complexity of human trafficking. In this way, Kristof is an agent of HTD.

Another primary agent of HTD is the nation-state. The narrowing of human trafficking to sex trafficking has been attributed to some states' use of HTD as a moralistic way to justify greater restrictions upon the movements of people (O'Connell Davidson 2010, Agustin 2007, Chapkis 2005, Kapur 2005, Kempadoo and Doezema 1999, Weitzer 2007, Isgro et al 2013, Farrell and Fahy 2009). In Levy and Jakobsson's analysis of Sweden's landmark, "pro-feminist," anti-prostitution law, where the purchase of sex is illegal but the selling of it is not, the law serves to further control women deemed "deviant and disruptive to normative hegemonic masculinity" in that undocumented women who sell sex agentically are "sent home" (2005: 333). Their assertions are mirrored by Kamala Kempadoo (2005):

> "Ideologies about the traffic of persons today are couched in various feminist and human rights discourses, yet continue to rest on moral indignation about violations of womanhood and support 'migration-management' policies and tighter border controls, greater policing of (im)migrant and Third World populations and rescue missions in sex industries. In short, the panic about human trafficking leads to an intensification of state surveillance of the migration and income-generating activities of working people and to greater state control of women's sexual labour and agency" (2005: 82).

The notion of slavery, along with notions of prostitution as sex slavery and a fear of organized crime, was enough to "provide the [UK] government with a moral platform from which it can develop its regulatory (border and immigration control) capacity overseas" (FitzGerald 2012: 227). Further, Musto (2009) notes that referring to modern day slavery feeds into a neoliberal focus on consumption rather than the state and other macro-level (capitalism, structural adjustment policies) forces that actually create the conditions that, in turn, lead to massive exploitation. The smoke screen of "slavery," for O'Connell Davidson, is a "process of depoliticization" (2010: 256) where a neoliberal state draws on the valorization of the free individual while hiding state-imposed restrictions of freedom upon individuals.

Some scholars claim that the nation-state used the press to push its agendas on human trafficking. Doreen Marie Marchionno claims that HTD originated from the US government which strategically pushed the elite press to conflate human trafficking with sex trafficking (2012). While the narrowing of trafficking to sex trafficking was initiated in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) under President Clinton, she asserts that President Bush solidified the narrowing of trafficking to sex trafficking in the early 2000s as a political strategy intended to support big business practices of procuring the lowest wage labor possible. This conflation obscured most forms of trafficking which could be conflated with labor exploitation (Marchionno 2012). In a separate media analysis, Amy Farrell and Stephanie Fahy (2009) also suggest that HTD was a tool used by the US government, but in this case, to push a national security agenda. They found that the framing of human trafficking in the media followed similar trends in international

policy shifts, from Human Rights as a shared focus in the 1990s, to criminalization by the early 2000s. Post 9/11/2001, the crime focus within press reports of trafficking merged with a focus on trafficking as a national security threat (2009).

Further supporting the notion of the US in particular as a driver of HTD, scholars claim that a key US tool in identifying and combating human trafficking, the TIP Report (Trafficking in Persons Report), matches political alliances rather than actual state interventions regarding human trafficking (Snajdr 2013, Kempadoo 2005, Lloyd et al 2012). For example the TIP report places all nation-states into three tiers – Tier I is reserved for those states who have accomplished specific US-deemed important tasks related to fighting human trafficking. These tasks include creating a national action plan for dealing with human trafficking and the criminalization of prostitution. Tier III is where the least compliant states reside. However, Snajdr (2013) notes that Macedonia should, in theory, be placed in Tier III due to its current lack of anti-trafficking laws but, at his time of writing, was Tier I. Conversely, Kazakhstan was doing all that was required to be Tier II, but they had been recently moved from Tier II to Tier III due to political concerns that had nothing to do with anti-trafficking measures (Snajdr 2013). Further, Cuba is consistently Tier III but to date, and due to sanctions the US placed on Cuba, there is no information on anti-trafficking responses in Cuba at all (Kempadoo 2005).

There are institutional assertions for why the criminalization approach of HTD has had a global reach through the mechanism of the nation-state. For example, Paulette Lloyd, Beth Simmons and Brandon Steward (2012) suggest that countries with a more

extensive infrastructural connection to other countries, what they call "externalities" (e.g. existence of roads connecting two countries) are more likely to adopt globally popular (law and order based) anti-trafficking policies. In part, they suggest that the adoption of law and order based anti-trafficking policies is due to the structural impetus of being like one's neighbor so as not to receive the castoffs of one's neighbor. Additionally, they found that countries with no women in parliament were 10 times less likely to pursue a criminalization agenda than countries with about 10% of women in parliament, which is the global median. In this way, HTD is not always a "rational" step a nation-state takes because one would assume that a country with no women in the parliament would be most attached to maintaining the gender episteme of HTD which envisions women as safest in the private sphere.

It can be difficult to ascertain the exact reasons why a specific group in society pushes HTD over another version of human trafficking. Writing as a former member of an anti-trafficking organization, Sverre Molland calls anti-trafficking organizations "opaque" writing that "[m]ost trafficking research to date [which is done by anti-trafficking organizations]… mirrors the gaze of anti-traffickers, often with an instrumental epistemology where data is framed in light of means-end causation for the purpose of policy implementation" (2012: 315). In colloquial terms, if all the anti-traffickers have is a hammer, then everything begins to look like a nail.

Going Forward with HTD

In summary, Human Trafficking Discourse, or HTD, is a specific way the phenomenon of human trafficking is represented and addressed by various social agents. In HTD, the objects of human trafficking are feminized victims, incapable of helping

themselves. For example, citing the US Department of Justice as of 2011, Bernstein (2012) noted that no trafficking case, which matched the "innocence lost" trope of HTD, had ever been prosecuted. Use of HTD also simplifies the subjects of trafficking, those who are accorded agency in the HTD, to men and nation-states. The parameters of HTD lead to an inability of practitioners to strategize how to overcome global systems of poverty as a solution. Rather the solutions to the problem, within the parameters of HTD, are rooted in catching the criminals. Often, the victim of trafficking is epitomized as a young girl-woman whose family has abandoned her or sold her; her lost innocence, so essential to her being, is represented though her self-imposed death. Being a moral woman, then, and finding solace in the confines of home, are the ultimate end points for users of HTD.

There are many problems with a reliance on and institutionalization of HTD. First, it is inaccurate. Due to the complexity and fluidity of what it means to be trafficked and/or exploited, Gould (2011) notes that, "[t]rafficking is not useful as it does not reflect the lived experience of the majority of sex workers, and does not take the state or society any closer to dealing with exploitation and abuse that occurs in the industry" (2011: 530). Many social science scholars of human trafficking concur with Gould on this issue (Bernstein 2012, Bernstein 2007, Kempadoo 2005, Cheng 2010, Brennan 2004, Doezema 2005). Policy without the complexity of marginalized voices is ineffective (Desyllas 2014).

Second, HTD does not aid in deterring abuses in cross border migration. As Marie Segrave (2009) notes, there is a feminizing of low-skilled labor and in this way,

women in particular are a necessary component of economic growth on a global scale. If borders are tight but demand is strong, women will find ways to cross borders in "assisted migration." The state then, in closing its borders against trafficked persons, aids in creating the circumstances in which persons (especially those seeking low skilled labor, for whom the borders are especially tight) will seek informal routes to transgress borders (O'Neill 2001). Further, van Liempt (2011) theorizes that "framing assisted female migrants as victims can lead to the generalization that all migrant women are at risk and need to be protected. This, in turn, may lead to protective policy measures that often restrict women's choices even further" (2011:179). On the other hand, by focusing on women, male and queer-identified victims are effectively erased from the discussions.

Third, other perpetrators of violence against potentially trafficked persons are also erased. O'Connell Davidson (2010) suggests that the nation-state, at times, looks a great deal like a trafficker. She writes,

> "States use razor wire and guns to prevent people from moving where they wish to move. They detain them against their will. They use the threat of separation from their loved ones to make them comply with demands to move and then forcibly transport them from one territory to another. When states do these things their actions are not described as 'trafficking' or 'modern slavery', but are generally either applauded or accepted as integral to the legitimacy of the modern nation state that claims a monopoly over the control of mobility, as well as a monopoly on violence" (2010: 255).

I do not propose abandoning the attention to gender based violence, however. Coy and Garner (2012) note that while much policy and activism surrounding the issue of human trafficking utilizes HTD's victimization frame, academics often utilize a different

frame – that of the agency of individuals. They suggest, and I concur, that a focus on individual agency is just as problematic as a totalizing victimization frame because it then obscures or marginalizes the importance of the macro-level forces which do impact an individual's agency. Both systemic as well as agency focused approaches to the issue are necessary. Coy and Garner suggest that Rape Crisis Centers would be an interesting epistemic community to interrogate the balance of structure and agency, in that rape crisis centers balance between the two frames of supporting an individual's agency in dealing with their situation while at the same time attending to the structural realities of gender violence as a social phenomenon.

While the parameters of HTD result in silencing and obscuring some experiences of human trafficking, the silence or other frictions could, at times, be productive by leading researchers to seek the silences as informative sites of the discourse. Van der Pijl et al (2011) note, in conducting ethnography at a meeting where academics and service providers met to discuss the problem and solutions to human trafficking,

> "Hence, only 'best practices' with regard to prevention, help and fighting violence, exploitation and crime, were (proudly) presented; a critical reflection or feedback on the (moral) position of the experts themselves within the field and within broader society was, especially on the side of NGOs and social work, unmentionable. In particular, the idea that those who study or try to combat sex trafficking and migration prostitution might in some way benefit from a certain dramatization of the field and self-conscious making of a spectacle (i.e. by attracting media attention or funds) remained unspoken. This 'economy of appearance' within the "rescue industry' was clearly taboo and silence was all one could hear" (2011: 576).

They posit that the silences should lead to productive tension and confusion and are moments when discursive change should be explored. Indeed, discourse in action is messy and it is the uncomfortable silences, confusion and mismatch of speech and actions that are at the core of this research.

Dissertation Scope and Method

Discourse matters because within discourse, as I note above, resides social power. Discourse is the vehicle through which larger epistemes organize our social world. In order to better understand the discourse of HTD as well as the functioning of discourse as a theoretical concept which can explain how social worlds are organized, this dissertation unpacks the contents of HTD via an ethnographic discourse analysis. Ethnography enables me to observe not only what is said by social actors but also what is done. By focusing on the discourse of words, actions, silences and confusions in tandem, I seek clarity of deeper epistemes organizing social space.

I entered the discursive field of HTD via a safe house for trafficked women located on the East Coast of the United States in a large city; I volunteered at HOPE House for a total of three years. For the first year and a half, I focused my attention on assisting the executive director during daytime and early evening hours approximately once a week. I also spent time as house chaperone in three-hour shifts when the paid staff could not be present in the house approximately twice a month. At times I would act as driver for errands, other times I merely sat and watched TV with the house residents. When I was there at dinner time, I always ate with the residents. For the last year and a half of my ethnography, I focused on my work primarily with the development committee of HOPE House and attended bi-monthly meetings focused on obtaining funds

for the house. In these meetings we rebranded the house on-line and in print, altered our development strategy to include a diverse set of strategies to make money and create awareness, and planned our first gala. I also followed the workers and volunteers of the house to other sites of activism including a regional anti-trafficking coalition where I attended quarterly meetings and participated in the "social services" subcommittee for one year, as well as attended public United Nations meetings where a founder of the house attended as well.

After receiving consent from the executive director of the house as well as from all members of the house who I will discuss below, I took detailed notes following each time I entered the field. I also read articles in the local newspaper which were written about the house, and informally interviewed three of the founders of the house. I recorded, transcribed and took field notes on formal speeches that were given publically by helpers of the house, members of the regional coalition, and organized by or with the UN in mind (some of my observations took place during the annual Commission on the Status of Women meetings which included side meetings not officially part of the UN but intended for the same audience). I rested the bulk of my observations on the women who spoke and engaged with HTD. However, the residents of the house also became important players in this story because they navigated a manifestation of a highly hybridized version of HTD. I read policy, both international and US-based, to get a better understanding of the field of anti-trafficking beyond the geography of my observations. I also consumed as much public media as possible on the issue, including movies, popular books, documentaries and television shows in order to continually check

my assumptions that I was indeed seeing a popular discourse rather than a narrative which was more specific to my ethnographic site.

As an ethnographic discourse analysis, I sought symmetry and friction between speech and action. As a participant observer conducting ethnography, I employed the Extended Case Method (Burawoy 1998) which entails starting with theory. In this way, my gaze during my observations was focused. However, by taking detailed notes and analyzing them often, I also began to add additional theories to my observations. For example, I started my observations looking, A) for HTD and B) for use of an individualized focus on human rights to seek reparations for the women-residents. While use and silencing of HTD emerged from the field immediately, the role of a human rights narrative never appeared in HOPE House. Utilizing the process of "shuttling between theory and data" (need reference), I was able to release my attentions to potential references to human rights and instead sought theory to illuminate the presence of other phenomena that emerged, such as the rampant imposition of a specific hierarchy of residents at HOPE House.

I employed discourse analysis as I moved in and out of the field as well. In my observations I continually looked and listened for elements of discourse: the objects, the subjects, the causes of the problem, the strategies to fix it, and the tropes invoked. Instead of analyzing written texts, I "read" the bodies, actions and speech of participants as texts. By comparing lived experiences to a broader discursive field, I remained attentive to HTD, or the lack thereof, throughout my observations.

Chapter Outline

In chapter two, I delve deeper into the parameters and epistemes of HTD. I explain how HTD was mobilized at a UN meeting in 2011. To better understand a "narrowing in action" of HTD which took place at this particular meeting, I trace the history of both anti-trafficking activism and feminism from the mid-1800s to the present. This history enables me to hypothesize why HTD remains a powerful force in this international meeting despite evidence to the contrary. First, I find that HTD is a strategic tool for some international feminists to push a specific agenda. Second, I find that some who utter HTD appear to do so because the episteme behind it appears to be incredibly strong and salient to the audience, thus connecting the speakers to the audience. The result, I theorize, is two-fold. First, HTD as a strategic tool used by some feminists to gain voice results in an unintended outcome of co-optation of feminist actions into a non-feminist social field where women as a group are further objectified. Second, I theorize that mobilization of HTD results in symbolic violence, in that whole lives, voices, experiences and needs are erased from the agenda that is anti-trafficking activism, and other lives and voices are shoe-horned in. In both ways, lives are misrecognized and misrepresented.

I use two sets of vignettes in the dissertation as well. One is placed between chapters two and three, the other between chapters three and four. These vignettes are representations of the theoretical concepts of the dissertation, and are provided to further show the reader the complicated ways in which the various discourses are carried, resisted, or impacted in the house as well as individual lives.

Chapter three moves the reader from international incantations of the discourse and into HOPE House, where I explore the role of HTD in that house. Here, I find that while HTD is used strategically outside the house, it virtually disappears within the house. Instead, a hybridized discourse of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE), mixed with standard poverty management rules and Catholicism are the foundations of both the house structure and mitigation of many of the interactions within the house. Through examples, I show how this constellation of staff and other helpers' beliefs regarding the residents and their needs results in a reduction or at times destruction of residents' agency in a space where their agency is also viewed as key to making "positive" life changes. Further, I also show how the arrival and residency of internationally trafficked women who were not trafficked for sex complicates the discursive space of the house, which is focused on CSE, as well as how the helpers in the house negotiate this complication by attempting to squeeze the international women into the structure.

Chapter four details how HTD was used and resisted by HOPE House's development committee. Through an exploration of a year-long "rebranding" process in the house ending with a gala, I show how HTD remained an ill fit in the house as the development committee attempted to recreate a public face of the house. However, HTD took center stage once the development committee physically removed itself from the house and into the wealthy homes of committee members. I show how HTD takes over the public face such that, at the gala, the residents who attend the gala are visually and discursively diminished in order to maintain the discourse of HTD on that night. Last, I also extend work of scholars who assert that anti-trafficking activism is a site for

privileged women to establish and build a career in the public sphere; their subjectivity comes from their anti-trafficking activism. I find this is the case in my site and show how this subjectivity made through the discourse is created.

I conclude with three assertions. First, I assert that the narrowing of HTD to "women" is really a narrowing to young women. Second, HTD is a strategy based on cultural titillation due to its antiquated gendered and sexed episteme that should be challenged by anti-trafficking activists, including abolitionists, rather than pushed due to the fact that it further objectifies and obscures the problem and better solutions to it. Last, at the theoretical level of understanding the role of discourse and social power and inequality, I assert that epistemes within discourse theory are under-theorized. By further engaging in how various epistemes fit between different discourses, for example between the Christian rescue industry and the feminist CSE movement, one is able to more effectively identify forces that hinder social change.

Chapter Two: Narrowing in Action: Human Trafficking Discourse (HTD) on an International Stage

Introduction

Chapter one detailed an over-simplification of the concept of human trafficking into what I call Human Trafficking Discourse (HTD). In media and in many policies (both US and international), human trafficking is narrowed to the sex trafficking of women and girls. But what does HTD actually look like in the discursive field? Why is attention to HTD important to recognize and understand? The remainder of this dissertation addresses these questions.

In this chapter, I begin with a specific event that took place at the United Nations on September 21, 2011. On this day, various global experts on the issue of human trafficking gathered to address "innovations" in anti-trafficking policy and practice. This event was significant because it occurred nearly two years after a 2009 UNODC report (UN 2009) clearly questioned the narrowing of human trafficking to women and for sex. Further, this report put forth in no uncertain terms that a more complex understanding of trafficking in persons was necessary if we as a global society were to effectively eradicate the problem. However, at this 2011 UNODC sponsored meeting, HTD was still the dominant discourse. In order to understand why HTD persists, I trace the history of anti-trafficking and anti-prostitution activism that has been intertwined with international feminisms from the beginning. The history informs the reader that both framing strategies on behalf of some international abolitionist-feminists and saliency of underlying gender epistemes are at least part of the reason why HTD persists in public realms today.

Material and theoretical implications to the continued use of HTD become embedded in international law, and thus the narrowing is perpetuated.

The context provided in this chapter assists in theorizing why HTD persists, as well as potential implications of this persistence. First, I hypothesize that it persists in part due to strategy: international abolitionist-feminists, by focusing on the issue as a women's issue, are able to gain political traction in a space that historically marginalizes women's experiences. I also assert that there are subconscious epistemic influences regarding perceptions of women, men and agency, where men are agents and women are not. Via seemingly non-reflexive representations of "woman" and "victim" as synonymous, the speakers of the meeting direct us to an underlying set of beliefs about sex and gender. Last, using work on symbolic violence derived from Bourdieu's analysis of the concept, I theorize how this narrowing, conscious or not, is potentially violent because it renders all women helpless (whether they know it or not) and assists in the continued objectification of women.

September 21, 2011: HTD in action

On September 21, 2011, coinciding with the opening session for debate of the 2011 General Assembly, The United Nations' Department of Public Information invited its NGO representatives (of which I was one) to attend a presentation on "innovative" approaches to dealing with human trafficking.[17] The UNODC's Director General (also

[17] The panelists, in order of speaking, were Melanne Verveer (US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues to the UN); Joca Brandt (Director General for International Cooperation of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Mme Oliviera (Director of International Organizations for Brazil); Luis CdeBaca (UN Ambassador-at-large of the US State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons); and David Arkless (President of Corporate and Government Affairs of Manpower Group). The UNODC's Director General, Juri Fedotov, gave the opening remarks and the Director of the New York UNODC office, Simone Monasebian, acted as moderator.

the Under Secretary of the General Assembly of the United Nations), Juri Fedotov, gave the opening remarks for this special presentation titled "Innovative Collaborations to Combat Human Trafficking." In his short speech, not once did he refer to women or sex. Two years after the UNODC's 2009 "Global Report on Trafficking in Persons," which in no uncertain terms concluded that human trafficking was much more complicated than the ways in which many international entities had presented the issue in the previous fifteen years, I expected his presentation to be gender-neutral on its face, conceiving of human trafficking as a highly contextual issue, but with more subtle reminders of its effects on women in the sex trades in particular. Instead, he presented the issue using very broad terms, sticking with gender generic words like "trafficking in persons" and referred to trafficking as an "awful and abhorrent crime," and as "modern day slavery." He did not refer to women at all, instead utilizing terms such as "victims of human trafficking" and "victims of trafficking in persons." Quoting Martin Luther King, Jr., he stated, "We all come in different shapes but are in the same boat now." A woman in the audience audibly approved of this quote with "Mmm-hmmm." At this moment, I was surprised at how absent "gender" and "women" were from his remarks. I interpreted this absence as indicative of an institutional (UN and/or UNODC) attempt to expand the discourse of human trafficking that appeared to me to have started in 2009 with the UN's Global Report on Trafficking[18].

With the tone set, I did not expect blatant disregard of the UNODC's attempts to expand the discourse, but rather, again, I expected more subtle approaches to reassert a

[18] This report is discussed in the final section of this chapter. For purposes here, note that the report openly questions the conflation of human trafficking to sex trafficking, the conflation of women as the only victims, as well as the validity of all stats gathered on the issue due to these biases.

narrower discourse (to sex work, and asserting women as the primary victims), so I was a little taken aback at the opening comments of the next speaker who, it turns out, did not present an innovation. The presence and words of US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues to the UN, Melanne Verveer, quickly invoked HTD in a subtle and then a not-so-subtle way. Our organizer, Simone Monasebian, Director of the UNODC New York Office, introduced "Melanne" as the person who taught her everything she knows about trafficking. She told us that Ambassador Verveer was previously Chair and CEO of Vital Voices, an organization whose mission is wholly about women's empowerment on a global scale. In this subtle way, by including a renowned international abolitionist-feminist, the discourse almost imperceptibly started a shift to its more narrowed version. Verveer's presence, due to her past activism, informed the audience that she would most likely be talking about women. Her inclusion, on its own, did not wholly shift our attention to a more narrow approach to human trafficking because indeed there is a subset of human trafficking that is impacted by some very obvious patriarchal forces. It would make sense that someone of her experience would be included. However, using more direct words, Verveer completed the narrowing via her first sentence of her remarks on trafficking,[19] "[S]o we have come together here to put a spotlight on one of the worst forms of gender-based violence around the globe, the human trafficking of women and girls" (Field notes, 9/21/2013). Clearly, she was not shying away from the narrowing but rather blatantly invoked it. She then acknowledged that women are not the only victims of human trafficking, but only insofar as remarking that women are "*disproportionately*

[19] She began her speech with some light banter with some of the other panelists, as well as re-introducing all of the other panelists, in a way that reclaimed her role as expert/owner of the knowledge, rather than as panelist. However, the quote I cite signifies the start of the body of her speech.

impacted" by this crime. In this way, I infer that she recognized that men, boys, transgendered and queer individuals are also impacted, but she went on to note ways the US has engaged with other governments, the private sector, media, and non-profits to deal with the human trafficking of women and girls specifically. She did not create discursive space for the other gendered groups. Verveer appeared to be purposely conflating the concept of "victim" and "women," and the realm of human trafficking with sex trafficking. In other words, Verveer invoked HTD.

And so went the meeting – a UN sponsored, UNODC organized series of speakers all addressing "innovative" approaches to dealing with human trafficking. For the next hour, the five remaining panelists invoked HTD in one or more ways: by invoking the specter of women and girls as the victims of trafficking; by identifying the empowerment of women in particular, especially economic empowerment, as the solution to the problem of human trafficking; and, last, by referring to the women in their lives who inspired them to care about this issue.

First, every panelist invoked HTD by narrowing the objects (victims) of human trafficking to women and girls. For example, the Dutch representative Joca Brandt, declared that the solution to human trafficking entailed "the empowerment of women and girls, because that's what we're talking about today" (field notes, 9/21/2013). Representative Oliviera from Brazil began her talk by quoting Brazil's newly elected female president, Dilma Rouseff, who had just given the opening remarks to the UN General Assembly that morning. Directly quoting Rouseff, Oliviera said,

> I feel that here today, I represent all the women of the world: the nameless women, those who starve and cannot feed their children,

> those who are wracked by illness and cannot receive treatment, those who suffer violence and who are discriminated in their jobs, their society and their family life, those who labor in the home to raise future generations. I add my voice of the women who dare to struggle and dare to participate in politics and in the workforce and who forged the political space without which we could not stand here today. As a woman who was tortured in prison I know how important the value of human rights and liberty are. (Field notes, 9/21/2013)

UN Ambassador-at-large of the US State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Luis CdeBaca, reminded the audience of previous historical partnerships between historical abolitionists and feminists stating, "You start working on slavery and you start helping women; you start helping women and you start working on slavery" (Field notes, 9/21/2013). The last speaker, David Arkless, President of Manpower, set up his talk by emphatically declaring, "I can tell you how to put traffickers out of business: put women into jobs" (Field notes, 9/21/2013).

As noted in my discussion of HTD, at the core of referring to women and girls is a gender episteme of women and girls as objectified victims: trafficking is done to women. As Verveer asserted, women and girls are "preyed upon" by traffickers. CdeBaca, in discussing bringing traffickers to justice, remarked, "women, whose bodies are violated," have a right to see justice served. Arkless's narrative takes the objectification of women to its logical conclusion: "We *put* them into a safe place, *let* them keep their children, and *put* them in vocational training. And boy the traffickers are pissed" (italics mine, Field Notes, 9/21/2013). In Arkless's extremely narrow version of the discourse, women are "always already a victim" (Hua et al 2010) which requires them not to take up change themselves, but to accept the help of others.

In contrast, very few speakers referred to trafficking of men, boys or transgender individuals; when done, it was quickly mentioned and discarded. For example, Director General Brandt stated, "[t]hough human trafficking does not exclude men and boys, it mostly concerns women and girls," (Field notes, 9/12/2013). This statement flies in direct opposition to the 2009 UNODC research on trafficking. Attending a little more to the complex gendered composition of human trafficking, CdeBaca's presentation of an innovative collaboration literally made audience members gasp. He unveiled a new "Trafficking Footprint," a web-based application that allowed individuals to determine, based on their consumptive practices, how many "slaves" it takes to support a lifestyle. He reminded the audience, "[It's not that] 'sex trafficking is about women, labor trafficking is about men'… These old assumptions we have fall apart as the research comes in" (Field notes, 9/21/2013). In fact, he made note how surprised he was that the glitter in lipstick came from the labor of slaves, implying that the very women in the audience (which I estimated to be over 90% women that day based on a brief count), through their consumptive practices, can be complicit in trafficking too. With all of the previous narrowing and the narrowing that will follow this one remark, it is clear that the old assumptions do not fall apart. Rather, women and girls are objects to be saved, and all the speakers except Fedotov reminded the audience of this over and over. It is precisely because HTD relies on a powerful gender episteme that old assumptions don't fall apart.

A second way in which HTD was invoked was in the references to the empowerment *of women* as the primary way to stop human trafficking. Key to this reference is that women are presented as a unified group. Verveer made her assumption

regarding why empowerment of women is necessary quite clear, blaming "backwards" culture in light of globalization. She stated,

> [t]rafficking disproportionately affects females whose lower status and the lack of values that so many girls suffer from, where they are valued so little in their societies, makes them far more vulnerable to the perpetrators of this type of violence. Unfortunately, because of the ease of transportation today and global communications, it is easier for these criminal operators to reach deep inside villages to make all kinds of promises to families, and in the process, exploit more women and girls than ever before" (Field notes, 9/21/2013).

Just as Verveer was most blatant in her narrowing, she was also the only speaker who utilized a sensationalist trope to justify her remarks. By referring to "girls" being sold by ignorant families and even invoking a Joseph Conrad-esque "Heart of Darkness" aesthetic in which the traffickers reach "deep" into once impenetrable villages, Verveer's colonialist approach isn't veiled.

The other speakers engaged in similar calls to the empowerment of women as a group as the best solution to eradiating trafficking. Brandt summarized a program created by the Dutch government, in which formerly trafficked women staff and inform an organization in the Netherlands which aids the Dutch government in identifying strategies and solutions to deal with human trafficking. Potentially problematic, but not presented as such, the innovation she highlighted was the way in which sex worker "voices" informed the Dutch government of an influx of undocumented Nigerian sex workers into the Netherlands. The Dutch Government, she told us, went directly to the source and partnered with the Nigerian government to stop the movement of women at the Nigerian border. While potentially an effective law and order approach to the

problem, this innovative solution does not necessarily help women avoid exploitation but rather helps governments avoid unauthorized cross-border movements of citizens. Also problematic, the crux of Arkless's speech was based on an assertion that the employment of *women* will put traffickers out of business. However, Arkless's solutions, too, ignore some very real macro-level realities of patterns of global poverty, most significantly that many businesses continue to globally seek cheaper and cheaper (feminized) labor. As the examples show, the implementation of "giving voice" and "empowerment via employment" in order to overcome the sexism, which they root as a primary cause of human trafficking, is being done in ways which do not consider other aspects of inequality which also feed into the phenomenon of human trafficking, rendering their characterizations as well as solutions pithy at best and wholly wrong at worst.

A third way in which the group invoked HTD was in their attention to women in their lives who serve as inspiration. As host of the event and a primary, public UN figure addressing human trafficking, Monasebian referred to the knowledge of Verveer as formative in her own understanding of human trafficking. Monasebian told us a story of how, when she was traveling on the train from Washington, D.C. to New York to begin work as the Director of the New York UNODC office, Verveer and another colleague from Vital Voices traveled with her and taught her "everything she knows." In an another example, utilizing the lengthy quote from Rouseff, Oliviera invoked an image of a woman who struggled against state and market sanctioned inequality – a woman who was imprisoned and tortured and defied the odds of her gender and her activism in a repressive state to become President of Brazil. Oliviera does so in order to give voice and

agency to the women of the world – as a group. We are all to take inspiration from Rouseff's storied past. CdeBaca referred not only to his wife, a former women's studies professor, but to his mother and aunt who were active in domestic violence issues in the 1970s. I cannot say for certain, the conscious reasons why CdeBaca referred to the women in his life, but he was clearly aware that the activism, if not the laws, treats the issue as a specifically gendered woman's issue and potentially invoked not only his own feminist lineage, but also famous moments of feminist activism like the Seneca Falls Convention. As a man talking to an audience of mostly women about what is often perceived to be a women's issue, this reference to women both in his own life and historically linked him to the overwhelming female majority in the room. At least in part, speakers invoked a lineage of knowledgeable women and feminist activism to undergird their legitimacy to speak on the issue of trafficking and directed the listeners' attention to "women's" issues and to trafficking as a "women's issue." These subtle reminders that we are talking about women and to women keep HTD in the spotlight.

Three speakers spent part of their remarks detailing non-gendered or multi-gendered anti-trafficking innovations, resulting in three different manifestations of discourse. Perhaps ironically, the leader of the UNODC, a large symbolically powerful international organization, Fedotov employed a counter-discourse. Fedotov remained gender-neutral for his entire speech, and the innovation he detailed was also gender neutral: a trust fund set up by the UN to aid victims in accessing financial reparations. By remaining gender-neutral, Fedotov employed a counter discourse which was not shared by the other speakers. In contrast, CdeBaca invoked HTD multiple times despite

his multi-gendered and virtually un-sexed innovation. In other words, though the innovation he detailed did not address the sex trafficking of women, his remarks did. By narrowing the discourse to a focus on women and women's empowerment, CdeBaca's comments show a disconnect between the message of trafficking inherent in the innovation he was presenting (that human trafficking encompasses many types of labor exploitation and thus has many kinds of victims as well as many kinds of perpetrators, including global consumption) and the HTD-infused speech he was using to inspire audience members in that moment.[20]

Last, Oliviera's remarks detailed innovations created by the Brazilian government, and were an interesting hybrid of both HTD and a counter discourse. The projects mentioned by Oliviera entailed a great deal of multi-gender and multi-issue solutions to human trafficking, including support for unspecified victims at the Sao Paulo airport, a hotline for Brazilian nationals to call if they suspected the trafficking of children and teens, and special consular training for foreign embassy workers. These projects were created, in part, because the government of Brazil sought input from Brazilians who lived abroad; it was assumed that Brazilians living abroad had gone through the emigration process and thus understood where and how the system of global emigration might lead to individual vulnerabilities. Oliviera ended with a completely non-gendered conclusion: reducing poverty is key to ending trafficking in humans. Oliviera both invokes elements of the discourse by referring to women's empowerment at

[20] It is necessary to keep in mind that this example, while highly telling, is but one public meeting regarding trafficking. This site and the example it provides does not encompass what goes on behind closed doors, or in other areas of actual policy making at the UN. The discourse at this meeting is for public consumption; the experts are speaking to a room of NGO representatives and anti-trafficking activists.

the beginning of her speech, but she also effectively expanded the discourse about who the "real" victims are with her poverty-focused, more gender-neutral conclusion.

This snapshot of discourse encapsulates one moment in time – how the discourse crystallized on that day and for that group in that room. This meeting was for a public constituent base rather than for states' parties; while it appears that some state representatives were in attendance, the majority of those consuming the discourse at that moment were representatives of NGOs. Thus, the discourse uttered in that room, on that day, was not official policy. Rather, it was a middle space – somewhere between where the policy is made (already completed policy innovations are being presented to the audience) and where actions are carried out to aid in the fight against human trafficking. The discourse matters because while nothing substantive was done in that space, no policy was made and no victims were "saved," the collective effervescence created by the coming together of a variety of actors potentially seeps into the places of policy and action.

The question becomes, then, why does this narrowing to a specific form of HTD occur? How is it a process of historical forces and which historical forces support or contest the narrowing? Further, why in light of contemporary attempts at expanding the discourse, does the discourse continue to be narrowed in specific ways? This is important because HTD helps shape and inform social services provided to potentially exploited and vulnerable people. If the discourse represents a narrow version of who is vulnerable and how they are vulnerable, then social services will be impacted. And if social services focus on one type of vulnerabilities, their data will reinforce and naturalize the

narrowing. As a social scientist, I seek to understand how discourse and HTD in particular function so that better policies can be crafted and better services can be offered. HTD and the theoretical concept of discourse are both powerful and under-theorized elements of international law on human trafficking; the rest of this chapter provides historical and contemporary context to better understand why HTD was prevalent at that meeting.

A History of Anti-Trafficking Activism and International Feminisms: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Abolitionism within International Feminisms

Anti-trafficking activism has long been embedded in international feminist movements. To explore this unification of anti-trafficking and feminisms, I first look at how they were originally connected on an international scene. Then, I recount how feminism grew theoretically as well as internationally, extending beyond "Western" feminisms, after a period of some dormancy. For example, in CEDAW, abolitionism, drawn from the idea that all prostitutes were victims, took a back seat to intersectional notions of feminism. Next, I discuss how abolitionism returned en force to the international scene, and HTD became the primary discourse used by media, the UN, and the US government on the issue of human trafficking. Last, I detail the approaches of two international organizations that exemplify the contemporary debate on how human trafficking should be dealt with: the Coalition Against the Traffic in Women (CATW) and the Global Alliance Against the Traffic in Women (GAATW). I do so to show discursively how abolitionism and HTD, in the form of CATW, trump the intersectionality of GAATW.

The concept of feminism is, itself, highly varied and has undergone a series of sea changes over the past 100+ years. For this paper, I first discuss first wave feminism, feminism that emerged alongside anti-slavery activism in the mid-19th century that was focused on the transatlantic slave trade of Africans. Core to this activism was a push to change laws to accord all human beings their "unalienable" rights. For first wave feminists, just as race did not make someone less human, neither did sex. First wave feminism took the arguments of eradicating the slave trade and bestowing rights upon all humans to include women as well. Once the transatlantic slave trade was mostly outlawed and suffrage was won for most women in "developed" countries, feminism fizzled but didn't burn out. Second wave feminism was re-ignited in the United States with the publication of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. This book identified a "problem with no name" in which US, middle class women were isolated in their homes, many yearning to move into public spaces and use their education and knowledge for non-family related projects. Aspects of second wave feminism would not be able to encompass many women on a global scale, however, and so intersectional feminisms emerged – feminisms which attended not only to the uniqueness of being a woman, but the further uniqueness of being a raced, classed, abled, sexed woman as well.

A key distinction, within this story of feminism and anti-trafficking activism, is that radical feminism (described in depth below) theoretically supports an abolitionist approach to prostitution but, as I will show, is not synonymous with an "abolitionist-feminist" approach in anti-trafficking activism. This is because abolitionism is not necessarily feminist. Further, radical feminism is abolitionist to the point of abolishing all

heteronormative sexuality while abolitionist feminism is focused on returning a woman's sexuality to the home. This following section will lay out how this tension emerged in depth.

White Slavery and Abolitionism: Strange Bedfellows, Altered Data and Closed Borders

The first wave of feminism surfaced on an international scene championing issues of suffrage, the abolition of slavery and social and moral hygiene in the mid to late 1800s and an abolitionist stance regarding prostitution was a core subject among early feminist organizers (Doezema 2000). For example, a key figure in this early feminism was Josephine Butler who actively opposed Britain's Contagious Disease Acts which forced women, thought by authorities to be engaging in solicitation, to be regularly tested for venereal infections and to be imprisoned until healthy, if found to be infected. Butler opposed this Act because it unfairly imposed a double standard by placing restrictions upon women engaged in prostitution, but not men. For Butler, all prostitutes were victims – either of the state via the Contagious Disease Acts or of men who purchased sex from them. From the beginning, the issue of prostitution, a belief in abolitionism, and the fates of poor women were closely united with this early version of feminism.

International attention to prostitution increased around the turn of the 20th century as a global concern for "White Slavery" captured the imaginations of white, upper and middle-class, European and American feminists; the general public; and policy makers[21]. The "white slave," now considered a powerful trope of a moral panic which aided in the eventual tightening of international borders in the mid-1920s (Doezema 2000), was a

[21] For more information on international feminism's early interest in prostitution, as well as the white slavery moral panic, see Chapkis, Wendy 2003; Doezema, Jo 2000; Lobasz, Kathleen, 2010)

poor white woman, duped by unscrupulous men and stolen from her typically rural home to engage in prostitution in the city. While feminists concerned with "white slavery" sought the abolition of prostitution to solve this perceived problem, international policy makers used the more general public interest on the issue to justify closing national borders and further monitoring the movement of women in particular (Knepper 2013).

The "white slavery" panic looked a great deal like the anti-trafficking movement of today. For example the League of Nations created a coalition of abolitionist voluntary organizations (today's "NGOs") called "The League of Nations Advisory Council on the Traffic of Women and Girls" or CTW. This coalition produced strange bedfellows of feminist activists and Christian moral-crusaders, including the International Women's Organization, the International Catholic Association for the Protection of Girls, the Federation of National Unions for the Protection of Girls, the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women and the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children. As Pliley notes:

> Of these five groups, the International Women's Organization consistently put forth the most feminist abolitionist perspective, although the Catholic Association and the Federation of National Unions for the Protection of Girls, both represented by women embedded in the international women's movement, frequently followed the path paved by the International Women's Organization (2010: 95).

Among these abolitionist organizations, the International Bureau (IB) was particularly non-feminist in its motivation for pursuing an abolitionist agenda. The IB was an organization crusading for Christian-based moral purity rather than in support of women's free and unfettered movements (Pliley 2010).

This collection of strange bedfellows working on anti-prostitution projects produced mixed feminist results. In 1927, a commissioned report for the CTW determined that, yes, the existence of state sponsored brothels led to an increase of trafficking of women. However, historian Paul Knepper (2013) suggests that the data on Scandinavian countries, where state-sanctioned brothels did not exist, was removed from the final findings to fabricate a desirable "abolitionist" finding. Knepper found evidence that research had been conducted in the Scandinavian countries and had been removed from the collection of research documents which would eventually reside in the archives. He posits that even though the Scandinavian states had no state-regulated brothels compared to other nation-states included in the report, prostitution and "trafficking" was still present in Scandinavia and if the report would have considered the data in light of this, their findings would not have supported full abolition of government sponsored brothels. While it was hoped by international feminists of the day that this report would lead to the closing of all state-sponsored brothels, the opposite occurred in France. France decided not to stop their state-regulated brothels but rather to limit the movement of women across French borders. This concerned feminists of the time, but not moral crusaders, as it was a strategy that further limited the movements of women rather than dealing with what many feminists believed to be the true transgressor of trafficking in women – the state run brothel (Pliley 2010).

In this slice of history, we see three aspects of anti-trafficking activism which are, once again, coming to pass[22]. First, feminist supporters of anti-trafficking measures

[22] This will be discussed more fully when I detail critiques levied at the contemporary anti-trafficking movement at the end of this section.

found strange bedfellows with conservative Christian activists (the IB) in which an agreement of the best solution to the problem – to abolish prostitution – did not match the varied groups' underlying beliefs for why the problem existed in the first place. Second, data was purportedly altered to aid in political intentions – but with less than feminist results (a further monitoring of women versus increase agency accorded to women). This is also a common contemporary critique by some feminist scholars and activists against anti-trafficking activists today (Weitzer 2007). Third, public concerns regarding the movements of defenseless women resulted in the greater tightening of borders. As noted in chapter one, many scholars assert that a moral panic of human trafficking has once again led to a tightening of international borders (O'Connell Davidson 2010).

By the end of World War Two, the issue of "white slavery" and first wave feminist issues related to abolition and suffrage had ceded into the background of international politics. These early feminists had seen the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and had, in most Western nation-states, obtained the right to vote. Despite this waned interest, the newly formed United Nations crafted an anti-human trafficking convention titled *The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others* which was drafted in 1949 and entered into force in 1951. As the title suggests, in this convention the term "traffic in persons" was synonymous with the phenomenon of prostitution. Not straying far from its legal precedents, this document invoked as its foundation earlier international agreements on "traffic in persons" which are explicitly about prostitution of women, and about a "white" slave trade. With the convention in place, the Cold War of the next forty years takes

center stage and human trafficking, as an issue of international concern, went dormant. However, the convention, with its blatant connection of trafficking and prostitution, codifies the notion that prostitution and trafficking are synonymous. Would this unification of prostitution and trafficking last in the coming decades?

An Intersectional CEDAW: Decreased Attention to Abolitionism in Mid-late 20th Century International Feminisms

The issue of human trafficking will stay dormant on the international scene until the mid-1990s. However, feminism began its second wave in the 1960s and the basis for abolitionist activism became theoretically justified within one strand of feminism – radical feminism (Bernstein 1999). However, radical feminism was not the only "version" of feminism to resonate globally in the '70s, '80s and '90s. Intersectional versions of feminism, feminisms attentive to myriad sites and intersections of oppression and privilege, also infused global activism as the 20th century drew to a close. While it looked like intersectional feminisms would trump radical feminism in international feminist activism on prostitution, a key historical moment – the collapse of the Eastern Bloc – brought radical feminist versions of prostitution and the resulting abolitionism back onto the international scene.

Radical feminism concerns itself with the idea that a heterosexual, "male-supremacist" sexuality is a primary institution which legitimates ongoing male dominance and oppression of women (MacKinnon 1989). For Catherine MacKinnon and other radical feminists, all expressions of sexuality, where women are objectified (and commodified) serve patriarchy and male dominance. What's more, for some radical feminists, a powerful false consciousness blinds women to male dominance – in this way,

women consent unknowingly to their own oppression. By engaging "willingly" (but falsely so) in the sexuality imposed upon her, women who do not eschew patriarchal dominance are pawns of patriarchy. Strategies of empowerment in this version of feminism, then, are about consciousness raising and rely on the notion that when women understand how their power is taken away via their sexuality, that they will cease engaging in those forms of sexuality. In radical feminism, gender-norms must be eradicated. Once a woman understands her complicity in patriarchy, she won't play the game anymore: this is the essence of radical feminist politics. Catherine MacKinnon (1982) states,

> "[t]he substantive principle governing the authentic politics of women's personal lives is pervasive powerlessness to men, expressed and reconstituted daily *as* sexuality. To say that the personal is political means that gender as a division of power is discoverable and verifiable through women's intimate experience with sexual objectification, which is definitive of and synonymous with women's lives as gendered female. Thus, to feminism, the personal is epistemologically the political, and its epistemology is its politics" (120).

The connection of radical feminism to abolitionism is clear. For radical feminism, constrained choice regarding women's sexuality is not choice. Thus, for radical feminist thought, all prostitution is sex trafficking (Barry 1979). Prostitution is a social pathology – not on traditional moral grounds – but rather as a result of, and/or resulting in abuse of the women who engage in it (Levy et al 2013, Farley 2004, Jeffreys 1997, Raymond 1998). Sex work, then, if engaged in willingly, is never empowering and if women say it is, they are experiencing false consciousness. However, radical-feminist end-game is to throw off all forms of patriarchy – not to return women to a pure state within patriarchy. This is where abolitionism can at times run counter to radical feminism.

But as second wave feminism,[23] of which radical feminism is a part, expanded beyond the original class and race specific concerns of its founders, intersectional versions of feminism gained prominence on the international scene. Instead of focusing solely on patriarchy, intersectional feminists claimed that a variety of macro-level social constructs, like economy, gender, sexuality, social class, race, ethnicity, region, nationality, age, and physicality are all elements which intersect in individual lives in a variety of ways. As women of various backgrounds made their voices heard, the totalizing theories connecting all women's hetero-sexuality to patriarchy within radical feminism were less convincing. Intersectionality made assertions of false consciousness in radical feminism appear classist and racist because they disregarded the experiences of people who were less apt to be at the table theorizing.

A good example of intersectional feminisms having more traction than a radical version is how the issue of prostitution was eventually incorporated into CEDAW. In 1979, the UN adopted CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) which was eventually ratified after the required quota of nation-states signed on by 1981. An international bill of rights for women (Merry 2007, Keck and Sikkink 1998),[24] CEDAW sought to solidify women's voices in international politics.

While a less than powerful tool for activists, CEDAW was an important international instrument for the varied feminist-inspired debate over the nature of prostitution. Article 6 of CEDAW states, "States Parties shall take all appropriate

[24] The widely used option to ratify with reservations left CEDAW fairly powerless as a tool of international tool to address issues of gender discrimination, however. Most reservations were regarding CEDAW's treatment of family law, citizenship, and women's legal potential, effectively keeping women's "private" issues out of public international debate (Abdullah 2000).

measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women" (CEDAW 1979). Though Morocco had proposed that prostitution itself should be suppressed, the terms of the final convention do not go as far – instead opposing exploitation within prostitution rather than prostitution itself. By placing the focus on exploitation in prostitution rather than prostitution as inherently exploitative, international leaders incorporated an intersectional feminist approach to prostitution due to an unstated but clear underlying assumption that some prostitution was not exploitative. It appeared that at this moment in time, international law was setting itself up to decouple prostitution from trafficking. It was the potential exploitation within prostitution that concerned states-parties and their lobbyists when drafting the convention rather than prostitution itself. An abolitionist concern was present, per Morocco's request, but it did not overshadow the intersectional approach. As of the 1980s, then, intersectional feminisms, and increasing notions of women's agency, appeared to be gathering steam in international venues.

The Return of Abolitionism: Anti-Trafficking Activism Re-emerges and HTD Reigns

In 1989, Charlotte Bunch, an international women's rights activist and scholar, gave a speech to Amnesty International which declared that women's rights were human rights and the two could not be separated (1990). She made a case for an "international" construct of woman by asserting that women experienced violence due to their "womanness" regardless of their homeland (Bunch 1990). While she draws upon issues of equality and development, two previous unifying themes among international women's rights activists, she combines the whole of "women's rights" under the umbrella of violence against women's bodies: women in all the cultures that sweep the

globe were more prone to bodily harm than men simply as a result of having women's bodies. Among these forms of harm were rape, sex selection favoring boys, and being beaten in private and public spaces by family members. Bunch draws on a narrative of violence highlighting the role of women's bodies; however, by linking this violence to bodies an unintended result of her assertions is the essentializing of womanness to the body. The discursive unification of human rights and the international women's rights movement started with Bunch's speech, and full incorporation of women's rights into the human rights discourse was solidified within a few years (Keck and Sikkink 1998). By 1993, international women's rights were a central theme of the UN Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (Merry 2007).

Charlotte Bunch's speech, declaring women a unified group, is in stark contrast to the direction feminisms were taking at the very same time, and to an extent, the direction CEDAW had taken. A variety of international feminisms, including Standpoint theory, Black Feminist Thought, Post-colonial and Third World Feminism, all asserted that the construct of one woman's experience was inadequate and that instead, aspects such as social class, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and a variety of other intersecting social factors must be considered when discussing women's issues. Even more, when this intersectionality was considered, "Western" ideals of womanhood became an ill fit for the realities of marginalized or subaltern women (Kapur 2000). But just as many international feminist narratives followed broader international themes for the second half of the 20th century, Bunch's speech occurs on the cusp of great social change which enables her words to take on greater meaning to a wider audience despite the fact that

intersectionality-informed feminisms were more salient to many stakeholders on a variety of other issues.

The saliency of Bunch's speech and key to the return of abolitionism in some international feminist spaces can be found in the macro-forces of the moment – the global change which was opening borders and facilitating movements of people for various reasons. At the same time that this "third wave"[25] of feminism is being debated in intellectual circles, Europe began to experience more fluid borders. In the early 1990s, the USSR disintegrated, leaving a great number of people in poverty and without the social supports of their newly capitalist infrastructures. A result of this social change is that people went to the edge of, or cross, borders of nation-states looking for modes of survival and/or better quality of life. Additionally, the European Union formalized passport free travel between EU states (Levy et al 2013). Adding to this scenario, white women, whose plight may be more visible to international policy makers and activists due to their shared whiteness (Kempadoo 1998), were crossing borders for a variety of reasons, one of which was sex work. Some crossed on their own, others crossed with assistance, and still others did not cross willingly – or crossed willingly but were then pressured or were forced to work for sex. There are no trustworthy numbers on who crossed the borders from Eastern Europe to Western Europe in the mid-1990s, but there are plenty of anecdotes.

Based on the history presented here, it makes sense that intersectional feminisms, and thus an intersectional approach to human trafficking, could fail on the international

[25] Intersectional feminisms are credited with establishing a "third wave" of feminism: a collection of feminism which was more attentive to individual agency and rejected radical feminist theory.

scene for a variety of reasons. First, on a practical level, law requires neat categories and yet intersectional feminisms do not allow for women to be theorized into neat little boxes. Second, what emerges from the rubble of the USSR in the mid-1990s are tenuous and fluid borders and an increase of women crossing borders for sex work. History shows us that during times of precarity, like during the "white slavery" panic of the early 1900s, fluid categories are eschewed for more solid grounding. Intersectional feminisms rely on fluid categories but an abolitionist feminism, one which theoretically unites all women as a group, in need of great protection, is more salient to the general public and policy makers. For example, in the reunification process of East and West Germany, it was important to represent all German women as a cohesive group; they were not from the East and West, there were all women: Germany's women. Third, international feminist history shows us how feminists used the broader issues of the day to push their own agendas. At different times in history, abolitionist and intersectional feminists would seize the opportunity to be heard based on the reigning concerns of the global scene (Merry 2007). The saliency of the abolitionist message, at this moment of great social precarity in the "West," allowed it to be easily taken up by the general public and utilized by policy makers.

Fourth, once a specific abolitionist approach to human trafficking took hold in a few key nation-states, others would follow suit due to institutional reasons. Simmons (2014) posits that the criminalization of human trafficking (a core element of HTD) gained traction globally as the primary way to deal with trafficking and was due to three reasons, none of which are predicated on needs of trafficked individuals. First, an

emotive frame captured the interests of a general public, which led to public support of and pressure for criminalization. Second, pressure from more powerful countries shames countries into adopting a criminalization approach. Last, countries criminalize acts which neighboring countries have already criminalized as a preemptive strike – to keep criminal elements from moving into their space. Previously, Simmons also found, with her co-author Paulette Lloyd (2011), that states adopted a criminal frame due to a sensitivity of infrastructure between neighboring states. In other words, the more physically connected two states are via roads and other transportation infrastructure, the more likely one would adopt a criminalization frame soon after their neighbor did.

Fifth, elements of feminisms were usurped by the neoliberal state. Elizabeth Bernstein (2012) posits that an originally second-wave focus on emancipating women from the home has fallen way to a "feminist" reliance on the state to incarcerate individuals who make the outside-world unsafe. A heightened focus on sex predators (i.e. sex traffickers) exemplifies the vulnerabilities awaiting women and children outside the home. Bernstein asserts that a "carceral turn" of solutions to classic feminist issues like violence in the home and work inequalities functions to push women, including feminists, to reclaim the "home" as a key site of safety but this is due, not to it being safer (as we know that domestic violence is a cross-class, cross race, cross age, cross sex reality), but because as the neoliberal state obliterates protections for its citizens, some entity (ideally the family) must take up the slack. Bernstein calls this move back into the home "Feminist family values" where a pro-familialist ideal of sexuality is widely embraced and where recreational sex, especially sex for money, remains taboo even in a

neoliberal world where privatization of almost everything else is paramount. Bernstein asserts that the neoliberal state needs the trappings of a carceral (and, I assert abolitionist) feminism to embrace the family – and the external sex predator, including the trafficker, has been a fruitful mechanism for this process.

The Contemporary Debate Exemplified: CATW and GAATW

Today, both feminisms and anti-trafficking activism encompass a range of ontological and epistemological assertions. HTD, which is the primary way that human trafficking is addressed in media and political realms of the United States, relies on a less-intersectional and thus more abolitionist approach to women's sexuality. HTD is exemplified by the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW). CATW states in its 2001 annual report,

> [In 1996], it looked like there was no resistance to governments seeking to legalize prostitution as a form of work and regulate and tax it as a "sex sector," today this situation has changed. The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women has influenced anti-sex industry and anti-trafficking legislation in the Philippines, Venezuela, Bangladesh, Japan, Sweden and the United States; and regional anti-trafficking legislation such as the new SAARC Convention in South Asia. The Coalition campaigned for the definition of trafficking that is now part of the new UN Transnational Crime Convention's Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. CATW also organized the International Human Rights Network (IHRN), a coalition of more than 100 NGOs, to successfully advocate for this definition of trafficking that protects all victims, not just those who can prove that they were forced. Many of the measures to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and punish perpetrators were also initiated by CATW (CATW 2001).

CATW pushes a radical feminist theory of women's sexuality via their anti-prostitution policies. They encompass the dominant discourse on human trafficking and they do not shy away from a narrowing of human trafficking to sex trafficking, nor do they shy away from a heightened focus on women as victims. Additionally, they laud their successes of

inserting radical feminist theory into politics though they never call it such. As can be seen in the excerpt above, they use tactical narratives like utilizing the term "Human Rights" when in fact it is the clause "especially women and children" that is their greatest influence (Doezema 2005).

The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) exemplifies the intersectional approach. Founded in the mid-1990s, their basic principles are wholly embedded in intersectionality. Taken from their website, they promote themselves as:

> "…a network of non-governmental organisations from all regions of the world, who share a deep concern for the women, children and men whose human rights have been violated by the criminal practice of trafficking in persons.
>
> GAATW is committed to work for changes in the political, economic, social and legal systems and structures which contribute to the persistence of trafficking in persons and other human rights violations in the context of migratory movements for diverse purposes, including security of labour and livelihood. In particular, GAATW addresses the diverse issues arising from the trafficking in persons as currently defined in the Palermo Protocol. Within this framework, it addresses the core aspects of trafficking in persons: forced labour and services in all sectors of the formal and informal economy as well as the public and private organisation of work. Furthermore, GAATW promotes and defends the rights and safety of all migrants and their families against the threats of an increasingly globalised and informal labour market." (GAATW 2014)

GAATW stands in marked contrast to the promotions of CATW because their attention to intersectionality is overt and grounds their methods for both understanding the phenomenon as well as promoting solutions. Due to this intersectional approach, they also expand their reach beyond sex trafficking as well as beyond women.

What stands apart in the case of human trafficking and feminist anti-trafficking activism is that, while a majority of social scientific work on the issue of human

trafficking is critical of the abolitionist-feminist approach, the relatively small abolitionist-feminist CATW seemingly leads the US and global discourse on the issue of human trafficking. For example, Janice Raymond, a board member of CATW and prominent abolitionist-feminist scholar and activist, co-wrote an analytical report for the US government on human trafficking in 2001 with another CATW-aligned abolitionist feminist scholar and activist, Donna Hughes. Findings in the report show complete alignment with abolitionist beliefs. Because so many social scientific analyses of human trafficking show greater nuance to the experience of being trafficked, the complete alignment with abolitionist beliefs is suspect. Though the report is for the US government, the methods and recruitment of subjects for this interview project are hidden. Previously, Raymond had taken great heat for writing, based on her dissertation research and published in 1979, "I contend that the problem with transsexualism would best be served by morally mandating it out of existence" (Raymond 2015). Her intent in this passage is not to do away with transsexuals as a class of people, but rather to do away with an entire system of gender oppression where people alter their bodies and behaviors to fit a gender binary which reinforces male dominance. However, key to this passage, for me, is her call to morally mandate something out of existence, a remark that she stands behind to this day. The insulated projects of CATW and its members, and an overall strategy of moralizing, signifies that some of the key "experts" in the field of human trafficking are pushing an agenda, an abolitionist one, rather than seeking to understand and eradicate human trafficking.

The abolitionist feminists are very aware of the scholarly critiques levied against them and address these critiques with their own interpretations of the data (see, for example, Farley 2009). But this overt call to engage in social change via a moral mandate gives the unsuspecting researcher a glimpse at the strategy of a very insular group of activists (Molland 2013). The result is a singular focus, by abolitionist feminists, which in turn promulgates an association with religious conservatives (Bernstein 2010) who are also seeking to rescue women and children from male sexuality, but for different moral reasons (Weitzer 2007). Calling the neo-abolitionist approach to sex trafficking (and prostitution) a "moral crusade," Ronald Weitzer (2007) refers to the central claims of the approach as "problematic, unsubstantiated, and demonstrably false" (447).

Although an intersectional approach to feminist-inspired issues tends to reign supreme in other realms of feminist activisms, the abolitionist approach to prostitution remains discursively elevated. Globally, as well as in the United States, prostitution is not always legally treated the way HTD would have it be. For example, prostitution is legal in brothels in Nevada. Many US allies and neighbors have either legal prostitution or decriminalized prostitution, including Germany, The Netherlands, Austria, Canada and Mexico. Despite all this variety, and despite a strong intersectional feminism applied to many public issues, a totalizing HTD organizes much of the media and political attention to human trafficking in the United States, and this matters because HTD seeps into the laws.

Codified Discourse: Human Trafficking International Law into the 21st Century

As the UN "innovations" meeting in 2011 shows, HTD remains prominent in discussions of human trafficking. HTD is not just informally uttered, it is also embedded

into law. This section compares the presence of HTD in international law on human trafficking before and after the inception of the "new" definition of trafficking drafted in 1999. Via a content analysis of UN documents, I show how, despite a more intersectional definition of human trafficking established in 2000, a specifically gendered and sexed version of trafficking has remained dominant which runs counter to the celebrated intersectional definition. I also discuss the findings of a significant 2009 UN report on trafficking in persons where HTD is identified and questioned by the UNODC. I then return to the 2011 Innovations meeting – in an attempt to unpack and potentially better understand the significance of HTD materializing yet again at the 2011 meeting at the UN.

As the century prepared to turn, anti-trafficking activism and international organizational awareness of human trafficking was in an extremely heightened state due to the collapse of the USSR and the resulting visible movement of women across borders. However, international law addressing the problem of human trafficking was inadequate. The UN, with some NGO lobbying by organizations including CATW and GAATW, clarified the definition of human trafficking, and the result was a new, expanded definition of human trafficking that, as I will show here, was still quite dependent on the gender episteme of HTD.

Prior to the creation of the new law in 1999-2000, the 1951 *Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others* was the international legal tool designed to assist states in addressing the problem of trafficking in persons. As the title conveys, this convention explicitly narrows trafficking

to prostitution organized by a third party; there is no mention of other potential forms of exploitative labor. It also identifies that women and children are more vulnerable than men as potential victims. Core to the definition of trafficking in this document is that all prostitution that involves a third party is to be considered trafficking, consensual or not. If a third party deals with finances, sites of prostitution (e.g. brothels), or otherwise aids a person in conducting acts of prostitution, the presence of that person indicates lack of individual agency. In other words, even with the consent of the person having sex for remuneration, the third party involved (not the prostitute and not the person purchasing sex) is the culprit and should be punished.[26]

In 1999, the UN drafted a convention addressing transnational organized crime. Supplementing this broader convention were three additional protocols dealing with trafficking in persons, smuggling of persons, and firearms smuggling. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children became known in anti-trafficking circles as the Palermo Protocol. The Palermo Protocol redefined human trafficking from previous conflations of trafficking and prostitution to a more multifaceted version (Shoaps 2013). In this new definition, human trafficking included not only sexual exploitation but identified other forms of forced labor and organ removal as modes of trafficking in persons. The full and contemporary definition of trafficking in persons is,

> (a) 'Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means

[26] Article 1 of the 1951 Convention on Trafficking states: "The Parties to the present Convention agree to punish any person who, to gratify the passions of another: (1) Procures, entices or leads away, for purposes of prostitution, another person, even with the consent of that person; (2) Exploits the prostitution of another person, even with the consent of that person" (UN 1949).

> of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;
> (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
> (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;
> (d) 'Child' shall mean any person under eighteen years of age" (UN 2000).

The drafting of the Palermo Protocol, though officially done by states parties, included a great deal of hallway lobbying by activists interested in impacting the final document (see Doezema 2010 for an in-depth review and analysis of this process). Via informal lobbying, the new definition of trafficking was influenced by the competing perspectives of abolitionism and intersectionality. In the end, the definition of trafficking in this document clearly attempts to decouple feminization and sexualization from the concept of human trafficking. For example, the definition includes many forms of potential trafficking end-points beyond forced prostitution including forced labor and organs trafficking *while at the same* time excluding prostitution from the category of work. This exclusion hints at the presence of HTD in that the document doesn't "legitimize" prostitution as a form of work. The abolitionist lobby was unable to convince drafters to include all prostitution as exploitative and this separation of

prostitution from the concept of work was the compromise (Doezema 2010). So, on its face, the Protocol appears to be a compromise of the two perspectives on trafficking – both the abolitionist one and the intersectional one.

Despite this expansion of the types of trafficking in the definition, however, the Protocol remains heavily gendered in ways specific to HTD. A primary way this occurred was via inclusion of the phrase in the title, "especially women and children." In this way, the Protocol doesn't hide its special attention to women and children, rather it makes the conflation even more overt than the 1951 Convention. However, it then obscures to a certain extent the true meaning of including this phrase ("especially women and children") by expanding the issue of human trafficking to include all forced labor and by using a layer of gender-neutral language. The clause is meant to highlight that women and children as a group are perceived to be afforded less agency by society, thus requiring more protection, and it appears five times in the Palermo protocol. Conversely, the same phrase is used one time in the smuggling protocol and two times in the main convention. In this way, women and children are discursively linked to human trafficking and victimization. The opposite can be said of men. The absence of men from that clause excludes them from being a victim and thus being trafficked. Men, as a construct, are afforded more agency in this document than women and children. This obscures the potential objectification of men. In this same way, the document also obscures agentic movements of women and children.

The Palermo Protocol officially changes the international legal scope of trafficking from solely prostitution to forced labor *and* exploitative prostitution[27] and yet "victimization" remains gendered in that women (and children) are discursively the potential victims while men as victims are not mentioned (see Table 1). For obvious reasons, victims are given little attention in the majority of the Convention (as it is about trafficking in non-human objects) but are a main area of focus the Palermo Protocol, which makes sense as trafficking in humans requires, by definition, a victim. The word victim is also found in the smuggling protocol once, on the same page and in the same segment as its singular use of the term "women and children."

Table 1: Word counts for TOC Convention and 2 Protocols (UN 2000)

	"especially women and children"	Woman/ Women	Man/Men	"Gender"	Victim
Forward (1.5 pp)	1	2	1	0	2
Convention (39 pp)	2	2	0	0	7
Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in persons (10 pp)	5	14	0	2	30
Smuggling Protocol (13pp)	1	1	0	0	1

The Convention and supplementing protocols are not hiding their gender episteme from the reader. For example, the titles themselves indicate that women are grouped with

[27] Note how labor and prostitution are still separate, per the intense lobbying during the drafting. In this way, prostitution is kept separate from "labor" and "work" (Doezema 2010).

children as more vulnerable than men. This grouping of women with children does not hold in the actual document however – children can *never* consent to their movement across borders while women can. But the clause, due to the existence of an historical linkage of women and children as vulnerable (e.g. see R. Charli Carpenter's "Women and Children First" [2003]), is not separated out in the title nor in much of the text and appears many times in this and all future UN documents which refer to the Palermo Protocol. In this way, for the discourse of human trafficking, women and children remain overtly discursively united in international law regarding human trafficking.

The term "gender" is only present twice in the Palermo Protocol, though women and children are mentioned often. The rest of the convention refers scantily but specifically to women and children as special groups requiring attention. For example, the smuggling protocol only refers to women once and gender not at all. Specifically, the Smuggling Protocol states, "In applying the provisions of this article, States Parties shall take into account the special needs of women and children" (2000, 56). Conversely, the Palermo Protocol refers to gender as a context twice though these references to the term gender are empty – they mean women, because the potential victims in the entire convention are women. Underscoring the feminization of victim, the words women and woman are used 20 times in the entire document (the forward, the convention and the three protocols), the words men and man are used once. Thus, this document is not about all gender complexities. Instead, women (and children) are separated out from a category of men. Further, "men" must be assumed because "men's vulnerabilities are not discussed, except in reference to being a father and needing to care for a family which is

a narrative used in the forward of the document. The Convention and the Protocols are important. They infuse the entire UN attention to the issue and yet do not create an adequate space for agentic women or men at risk of victimization.

Fast forward ten years after the Palermo Protocol was drafted to 2009. With some fanfare, the UNODC presents their publication, *The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. What we see from 1999 to 2009 in the written text of the UN is a tension between HTD and an overt attempt to expand the definition of trafficking beyond the parameters of women-victims of prostitution. While the Palermo Protocol both overtly and covertly narrows trafficking to a women's issue and a sex issue, this 2009 UNODC report completely deviates from some key components of HTD. By 2009, we see the UN recognizing the narrowing of human trafficking to women as victims and to a focus on sex trafficking and calling for states parties to expand their own definitions and biases beyond what I call HTD. This report revisits the expansion of the definition of trafficking and is asserting that the international community to date has ignored or avoided the broader definition of trafficking codified in the Palermo Protocol.

First, this report deviates from earlier UN reports on the issue of human trafficking by calling attention to the lack of reliable information on the phenomenon of human trafficking. The preface of this report blatantly recognizes the gender bias in available statistics that assert that the most at risk group are women and children to be trafficked for the purposes of sex.

> [S]exual exploitation is by far the most commonly identified form of human trafficking (79%), followed by forced labour (18%). This may be the result of statistical bias. By and large the exploitation of women tends to be visible, in city centres,

> or along highways. Because it is more frequently reported, sexual exploitation has become the most documented type of trafficking, in aggregate statistics. In comparison, other forms of exploitation are under-reported: forced or bonded labour; domestic servitude and forced marriage; organ removal; and the exploitation of children in begging, the sex trade, and warfare. (UN 2009: 6)

Further, they assert that this bias is limiting lawmakers from creating effective policy.

> Only by understanding the depth, breadth and scope of the problem can we address the second issue, namely, how to counter it. So far we have not attained much knowledge and therefore initiatives have been inadequate and disjointed. Policy can be effective if it is evidence-based, and so far the evidence has been scanty. (Ibid: 6)

Last, in this report women move from being referred to only as objects, to also being subjects.

> a disproportionate number of women are involved in human trafficking, not only as victims (which we knew), but also as traffickers (first documented here). Female offenders have a more prominent role in present-day slavery than in most other forms of crime. This fact needs to be addressed, especially the cases where former victims have become perpetrators. (Ibid: 6)

Although I didn't know it at the time, 2009 was actually an interesting moment to study HTD at the UN because this report cast doubt upon all statistics gathered previously by the UN with regards to human trafficking, brought into question policies made based on those statistics, and debunked the notion that women are only victims. In late 2009, the United Nations partnered with the International Labor Organization to provide a briefing on forced labor. At this briefing, I write in my field notes that I am "really surprised –

thought prostitution would be more present but not yet" (Field notes 9/1/2009). In this particular two and a half hour briefing, a relatively comprehensive presentation of issues related to human trafficking is addressed. While trafficking for sex is not ignored during this presentation, it also does not take center stage. Much time is spent on what the presenters call economic trafficking and debt bondage. Even once the floor is opened to accept questions from the audience, the topic of human trafficking remains nuanced rather than narrowed. Though I am unable to identify why the report in 2009 was so blatant in its call for overhauling the concept of human trafficking, it appeared to me that my hypothesis of a narrow discourse was changing – that instead I would witness an expanding discourse, a changing discourse in the coming years. However, as we see in 2011, this would not yet be the case. An ongoing contest over the scope of human trafficking saw abolitionist feminism controlling many public faces of the discourse – at the UN, in US law, and in the media. The 2009 report states that because the advocacy groups focus on women, we erroneously assume women are more often victimized. However, it is within many of these advocacy groups where HTD continued to circulate unquestioned.

HTD: As Narrative Tactic, with Epistemic Roots, and To Violent ends ?

By the end of the 2000s, the UNODC states in no uncertain terms that the categories of HTD are only part of a bigger story of labor exploitation. They call into question all data that are biased toward this narrowing and uncover that women as well as men are traffickers and are trafficked.[28] And yet, in 2011, Melanne Verveer emphatically

[28] Note the concepts of trans and gender queer are absent from the discussion of gender in the UN documents I reviewed.

calls human trafficking, "[o]ne of the worst forms of gender violence around the globe – the human trafficking of women and girls." She does not bring to the discussion a specific innovation, rather stating that she'll leave that up to her colleague; there were two US ambassadors to the UN on the panel. Instead, in broad strokes she summarizes how innovative approaches to empowering women and girls can be undertaken via partnerships among various realms of society. Based on her remarks, her "job" on that panel was to ensure that women were not erased from the discourse.

Using history as a guide, as an international abolitionist feminist, Verveer is up against a very male-dominated, androcentric system of nation-states. She and others who have gone before her must fight for a voice at the table and framing issues in a light which is salient to the general public and to governments has proven to be an effective way of taking a seat at the table. At different times in history, international feminists (who are not a monolithic group but share the endpoint of empowerment of all people) have used a variety of narrative tactics in order to push feminist agendas – in order to make visible a very real and violent patriarchal system for many women and girls across the globe. Assuming Verveer is informed by the radical feminist version of women and sexuality, one of those issues is the prostitution of women and girls. In this way, it appears that Verveer uses a discourse that is incredibly salient with a larger populace for strategic voice to further her aims. She does this despite the fact that the UNODC has determined that her version of trafficking is antiquated or, in fact, biased and thus wrong. Much like her radical and abolitionist feminist predecessors and colleagues, by invoking the discourse and framing the panel within the brackets of HTD, she invokes a "feminist"

moral mandate by asserting that we as individuals cannot lose sight of the women and girls. However, she does so in a way that is potentially counterproductive to her overall mission, which is to empower women and girls because an important aspect of HTD is the objectification of women and girls. Like dominos in a line, all the speakers following Verveer invoked HTD again and again and it seemed that in that moment, HTD reigned supreme.

The abolitionist approach to human trafficking is salient for users of HTD because the underlying draw of abolitionism is neither radical[29] nor revolutionary. Speakers failed to contextualize HTD during this UN meeting because a compelling narrative of women-victims and sex slavery fits the underlying gender-based epistemes better than an intersectional narrative would.[30] These include epistemes of women as objects and not subjects, of women as victims and not agents, of women as bodies rather than minds, and of women safe at home rather than out in the world. These epistemes are very clear in the remarks of the innovations speakers: women's bodies are objects and are the property of family and nation. For example, Brandt details how they are to be stopped at the borders and overseen by the state. For Arkless, they are to be "put" into jobs. In this way, the speakers put forth the belief that women are objects of male dominated institutions and just as traffickers reduce women (people) to their bodies and treat them as property, so do the speakers on that day at the UN. They do so because, in part, they are parts of their culture. No one up on that stage would literally say women are property and yet their remarks, to varying degrees, logically inferred just that.

[29] At the core of radical feminism is a rejection of traditional gender norms, e.g. women as inherently victims.
[30] Previously identified in chapter one.

The implications of this strategic use of HTD in 2011 are unknowable. However, scholars have theorized that this misrepresentation of the issue of human trafficking, whether strategic or just done uncritically, has the potential of symbolic violence. In their article, *US Sex Trafficking, Women's Human Rights and the Politics of Representation*, Julietta Hua and Holly Nigorizawa (2010) recount a story of a Russian woman who recanted her trafficking story and refused to take part in the trial against her traffickers. This woman returned to Russia from the US on her own accord and adamantly stuck to her assertion that she was not trafficked. However, the US prosecutors didn't allow her recanting into the evidence, and paid her damages upon their successful completion of the case. The Russian woman said she wasn't trafficked. The US government officials said she was. Hua and Nigorizawa call this act of ignoring the wishes and assertions of the woman "violent" (2010). But how might state-level reliance on HTD, and assumptions that women victims might not even know they are victims, be violent to people who have experienced labor exploitation?

Physical violence is an act of force upon the body, and symbolic violence is also domination of the body (bodies) in which the dominated must legitimize the realities of the dominant group. However, symbolic violence is different from brute force in that "symbolic violence [is] subtle and disguised but nonetheless effective in its impact and seen as legitimate" (Morgan, Karen, and Suruchi Thapar Bjorkert 2006: 444). Done via forms of "micropolitics," this subtle enforcement takes place in "words, gestures, movements and intonations of domination" (Krais 2000:171, cited in Morgan and Bjorkert 2006) as well as "schemes of perception and dispositions (to respect, love,

admire etc.)" (Morgan and Bjorkert 2006). Like Foucault's understanding of the panopticon (1979), where prisoners internalize the constant potential of guards' gazes upon their actions such that the prisoners discipline themselves to stay within the rule structure of the institution, symbolic violence is a mode of acquiring consent from the dominated to be continually dominated (Bourdieu 1989). This complicity of all actors could tie into the theory of false consciousness of radical feminism. However, in the case of HTD, it is abolitionist feminists (and their reliance on the criminalizing state) who push the falsehood that all victims fit a very narrow, objectified mold. In theory, if HTD becomes institutionalized due to abolitionist feminist use of the discourse as strategy, then they too are complicit in violence against women – a completely unintended consequence but a potential consequence nonetheless.

Morgan and Bjorkert identify three features that encompass a Bourdieu-inspired understanding of "symbolic violence": consent, complicity and misrecognition. In this way, symbolic violence requires the "victim" to take on and take up the dominant way whether it is best for the victim or not. Misrecognition is what allows this complicity and consent to occur – it is "the process by which the objective reality of the social order becomes obscured by explanations of that order that have achieved the status of the legitimacy of acceptance" (Penny Dick and Sara Nadin 2011: 296). Symbolic violence keeps people in their place not through brute force but because the people, in order to stay in that space, must apply "dominant criterion… to their own practices" (Bourdieu and Botanski 1975: 8, in Morgan and Bjorkert 2006).

As I note in Chapter One, discourse is a function of social power; it is what is and can be known. Symbolic violence fits neatly into a conceptualization of discourse as power. Referring to the "punishing power of protection," Jennifer Wood (2005) asserts that protectors "legitimize their use of force by claiming to act on behalf of those they protect" (2005: 4). Power, via symbolic violence, can be disguised as care or concern and "allows the open production, in public view, of a wish or a practice that, if presented in any other way, would be unacceptable" (Bourdieu 1990: 85).

Feminist theory, and not just radical feminist theory, asserts that the first step to enacting violence upon another individual is via the objectification of the potential victim (MacKinnon 1989). As I note above, women and children are objectified in the 2011 speeches at the UN. But for the implications of this objectification to be better understood, we would need to follow this discourse, HTD, into sites of care: look for further examples of objectification; look for hierarchy and domination to maintain this hierarchy; look for mutual consent and complicity of the dominated and dominators to maintain this domination as well as look for the outcomes when consent is not given. In addition, we would need to look for potential sites where the prominence of intersectional feminisms retained or asserted a stronger foothold – even within sites of activism where HTD is clearly the reigning discourse. What happens when the trafficked survivors' intersections and desires contradict the boxes of "ideal victims" created by HTD?

Conclusion

An entire "industrial complex" of anti-trafficking activism has emerged based on HTD and which is undergirded by an episteme of women as inherently objects. What was once a radical feminist rejection of gender as it is constructed by dominant US

culture, and in which abolitionism was a core organizing principle, has become co-opted by a less radical and revolutionary version of "feminism" – abolitionist feminism. I theorize that abolitionist feminism is so concertedly focused on the victimization of women that it has unwittingly fed into and wholly supported the traps of patriarchy as a dominating force in US and even a more global culture. These traps include objectification of women and a resulting violence which occurs from a denial of agency and knowing of women, and denial of victimization of others who do not fit the "natural" category of women: men, boys, trans and queer individuals.

The rest of this dissertation attempts to follow HTD into a safe house for trafficked women: does a safe house for trafficked women, where real, complex women are the recipients of care, utilize HTD? What kind of woman finds her way into a site of service for trafficked women in the first place? Why do other individuals feel called to work with or for trafficked women? Activists in these sites care deeply about the issue of human trafficking and dedicate their lives to helping women and girls leave a life of exploitation behind, but as I will show, use strategies which reduce the agency of the people they seek to help with mixed results.

Vignette One: "It's not that Simple": Volunteering and HTD

Volunteer Orientation, 2010

Sister Marilyn led me to the formal dining room on the left. The living area is to the right – and a woman (resident) is sitting in that room. The house is very hot and there are four Mountain Dews on a big long dining room table. One woman is already there; she introduces herself as Lucinda. She is white, and lives in a very wealthy suburb (looked at her address on the sign-in sheet), well dressed with no gray hair, but certainly older than me, I think. She's connected to a local private college in the same wealthy section of town. Then a law student, Jill, joins us – from another local urban university that is known for its grittiness. She is not entirely white, but certainly upper middle class based on her clothing and speech patterns – looks hip and has a cool, alterna-style. She attended a talk on trafficking at her university where Carol Brennan spoke, and wanted to "do something."

Two other women, coming together, are lost. They've called for help. The house is a "safe house," so sometimes the address isn't given till the last minute. Lucinda said she got the address while driving in her car. They did a background check on me before giving me the address. They eventually arrive and are a red headed mother and daughter pair, Mary and Jenny, and appear to be quite wealthy based on clothing and affect. So we all go around and say how we found out about HOPE House and Jill goes first, then Jenny says she goes to [a very prestigious Christian college in the area]. She "just wants to help out." The other woman, Mary, is Jenny's mother. She tells us she's friends with "Lacy" (another volunteer is my guess), does a lot of missionary work and when she mentions one missionary thing she does – Lucinda chimes in –"Me too!" I missed the exact reference but it is clear that three of the five volunteers are presumably conservative Christians.

Interestingly to me, the main point of the short orientation is this: DO NOT TRY TO CONVERT ANYONE! Respect the women and their past, present and future and just be there in a respectful way. Sometimes you will hear foul language, they inform us, or see anger, and that is ok. The new residents are Muslim and the nuns spend a few minutes talking about how to respectfully "do" Christmas.

The shelter was gifted to them from another order of nuns for a dollar. It is a beautiful old house. They've had only a handful, maybe 11 in total since they opened [a year and a half ago], of trafficked women all sent to them by the FBI, and only one was able to get the T-visa. All have moved on, as it is a voluntary place to be, but they just got these three new residents a week ago. A discussion ensues after they give us a brief history of the shelter and mention the scant number of residents they've had in the house.

"Why only 11? There are thousands!" exclaims Lucinda.

"We don't know," answers Sister Marilyn.

"What about the massage parlors? Can't we just go in and get them out of there?" queried Jenny.

Sister Marilyn says it is difficult to just go in somewhere and take women out. "The trafficking situation is very difficult to work with, and you can possibly further harm the women if their traffickers find out people think they are trafficked," she says.

I ask what volunteers do there. Mostly it's just a 5-8pm gig, being present (legal Safe house rule) and you can bring things to interest the women (one woman brought in an electric piano), but don't be surprised if they ignore you or just don't talk much. The volunteer has to always answer the door, and look out first through a barred window, to see who is there. No one can be allowed in, unless they were previously invited. Very rarely have men been allowed in at all. Like, once or twice, as workers… The "international" women usually don't speak English, so interfacing in English is done with the 3 or so US-born residents – women who have recently gotten out of prison.

"What's the average age?" someone asks.

"Well, right now everyone in here is over 45," informs Sister Eileen.

This information leaves everyone in silence for a second – a slightly longer pause than might follow a more expected answer.

"What happens to the trafficked women? Do they get sent home to their families?" this question from Jenny.

"It's not that simple," says Sister Marilyn, again mentioning that the women come from complex situations.

The training was quick, maybe twenty minutes tops – and Mary clearly wants to stay and talk to the nuns. This mother and daughter team have such a comfortable and "caring" affect, sweet and gushing; Mary wants to talk about "Lacy" - the woman who told her about this place. The other Lucinda and Jill leave quickly, though I'd intended to stay and engage. However, Mary and Jenny dominate the space and conversation, so I eventually leave too.

According to the comments of the potential volunteers, the assumption of "what a victim is" fits with HTD: young woman, duped and prostituted, in need of rescue, and missing her family. In the reality of HOPE House at that moment, the residents do not fit

this profile. The youngest resident in the house that night was 45. Most residents, I would learn as I started to volunteer there, had maintained communication with their families. The residents born outside of the US had not been trafficked for sex and the residents who were US born were not considered trafficked by any legal standard. The assumption by potential volunteers that there are thousands of victims and yet so few victims have passed through the doors of HOPE House shows misfit of definition and scope of the problem. Clearly, the trafficked woman of their imagination, the one informed by US culture and soaked in HTD, does not live at HOPE House. The silence after we were told that the residents were middle aged women was telling and during the three years at HOPE House following this orientation, I never saw nor heard from any of the other attendees to this orientation again.

* * *

Wonder Woman
Then the door bell rings.

"It's Pilates time." Stephanie calls out in a dull voice while answering the door.

She starts calling up the stairs for the others. In walks a Pilates instructor. No, she doesn't walk in – she nearly floats in with unbridled excitement over the beauty of the day. She is happy to be there – saying hello to everyone, moving fast and purposely. Such a difference from the "no affect" that has been the norm in the space today. I mean, I try to blend, so I try to tone down my affect. I don't come in all bubbly – this is their turf! Pilates instructor, on the other hand, just walks in and takes charge of the room's energy.

Everyone who is downstairs grabs a journal – with a picture of Wonder Woman on the cover. The instructor gets the mats in the back office and asks Stephanie and Jane to help carry. There's no other word, she is PERKY. She has downloaded great new music

for them, she exclaims! Stephanie and Jane take the mats with absolutely NO AFFECT. She encourages Judy, who just got out of the wheelchair, to come too. "You did GREAT last week! And it was your first time since the accident!"

The residents all shuffle towards the backdoor. The studio is in a garage converted to a meeting space. At some point in this scene, where the energy of the space is transformed so quickly, the instructor introduces herself to me. I forget her name. She's all happy business though and leads everyone out to the back garage which has been transformed into a meeting space/studio.

…At 4:15, everyone comes shuffling back in. Judy and Jane sit back down in front of the TV immediately and are breathing hard.

"I've never done Pilates," I say, "is it hard?"

Jane answers: "Yeah."

The Pilates instructor, Cindy, was a welcomed volunteer, by staff and founders of the safe house, in part because she was teaching a different type of social skill via her personality and also leading the residents in Pilates-based work-outs. Eventually, many of the residents would take the bus into the city to practice at her studio. Cindy was worldly – she'd lived in post-Soviet countries for years before she experienced her own potentially trafficked experience (I was never sure as she always glossed over the details but referred to her experiences more generally) from which she'd escaped. She had since started a Pilates studio which doubled as a rehabilitation space for victims of sexual abuse. Her posts on Facebook were generally sex positive so I concluded that she did not share all of her beliefs with the staff of HOPE House, but Cindy and her work were well received by the house staff and founders. Though my perception of her softened over time, and I came to respect her work, I found her initially to be energetically overbearing in the house by not meeting the residents at *their* level in *their* house. In fact, her strong

presence came to negate the required passivity I witnessed in the house. Cindy was about action, not objectification.

Entrepreneurism

A couple of days after I first met Pamela, I went to HOPE House on a Friday. That's my new day to go. And she was there! She was reviewing English with two of the "international" women. I was working in the arm-chair in the little room between the office and the living room – where Sister Marilyn normally sits. And she started asking me questions; she recognized me from the coalition meetings. When is the next coalition meeting – and "I didn't get that e-mail!" (regarding the date of the next meeting).

Then she asked me, "Do you know of any work training programs here?" Here, meaning in the city.

"I was thinking," she says, "if they could just learn some work skills…" Many of the women are in work training programs, and getting their GEDs and the non-English speakers are all learning English… But then Sister Marilyn comes in with Sister Rose, and Pamela shifts her attention to them, and they just say, "No, I don't know of any."

Pamela goes ON and ON about trying to find work skill programs. I feel my irritation rising, and then Sister Rose rolls her eyes at me!

Then Pamela asks if she can commission Indriani to make a scarf for her.

"OK," they say. I think they would just say anything to quiet Pamela at this point. She's a talker.

[The next week], she's back, and Indriani has finished the scarf. Pamela spends a great deal of time working up a "receipt" for Indriani. Indriani doesn't know how many hours it took to make it, but three days she worked on it. Pamela writes at the top of the receipt, "JOB TRAINING," and then writes the name of Indriani and where Pamela got the materials (Wal-Mart), and how long it took and then she asks Sister Marilyn to witness the financial transaction between her and Indriani, with a signature, and she has Indriani sign too.

Pamela then brings the receipt to Sister Rose. Pamela asks, "What do you think? I want it to be clear that this is for job training."

She then explains the receipt to Sister Rose, line by line. When she gets to Indriani's name, Sister Rose is cautious, "You should ask the social worker."

When she gets to the Wal-Mart part, Sister Rose says, "Take that out – many in my community won't shop at Wal-Mart." Pamela appears confused by this; she says she's never heard of this before, but agrees to take it out.

"Yes, I think you should have the social worker look at it," concludes Sister Rose. It is a nice scarf, and Pamela wears it around her neck for the rest of the afternoon.

Sister Rose and I are busy with grant work. Pamela tries to re-push the job training thing – but Sister Rose is a bit impatient.

"Just ask the Social Worker…." She says to Pamela, brushing her off.

Pamela's presence in the House was as overbearing as my first experience with the Cindy but Pamela was much less welcomed by staff than Cindy. The staff relied on a professional social worker and a trauma counselor to help with the larger "life" guidance issues like education and work. Volunteers were urged to teach life skills but the staff and founders wanted professionals to help with issues like employment and dealing with trauma. While Sister Marilyn often told me to teach the women about dietary issues (less salt for the "international" women, less junk food and fatty foods for the US born women), about budgeting (especially when someone was slated to graduate from HOPE House) and about using the computer, the bigger issues like getting a job or figuring out a life trajectory, were managed very secretively. This firewall between volunteers steeped in HTD and perceived trajectories of residents on in the house is telling of a contentious relationship that staff and founders of the house had with HTD. This will be analyzed in more detail in chapter four.

Both Cindy and Pamela enter the space of HOPE House and assert their version of what the residents needed in this house. Both had ideas about what was good for the residents, based in part on HTD, though Cindy's understanding of the issue was far more

nuanced than Pamela's. However, the lesson to learn from staff responses to Pamela is that the staff and founders countered ideas rife with too much agency, like teaching entrepreneurialism, yet fostered social skills training which was highly class-based and would most likely not fit into the low wage employment situations for which they were training. Ultimately, it comes down to agency and potentially a rejection of neoliberal reliance on the individual. Instead, and certainly unintentionally, a very precise form of "woman" was being taught in that space, one with low agency and little independence.

I'm suspicious of the notion that entrepreneurism was the best way to help residents. And yet, at least one of the "international" women was already posting signs around the neighborhood, advertising for house cleaning at this point. In this way, teaching entrepreneurism and the skills for creating her own business in US culture, might have been best for her. However, she was very discouraged from doing this by staff and eventually stopped. The job she obtained in the end was an hour and a half bus ride away, cleaning hotel rooms for near minimum wage. Perhaps this fear of economic agency for the residents was as damaging as the potential exploitation that came with being a lone wolf. In the end, it was the belief system behind the discourse of the house which made one volunteer acceptable and another ignored: women needed to heal their insides, not venture outside.

Chapter Three: The Disappearance of HTD: Commercial Sexual Exploitation and a Safe House for "Trafficked" Women

Introduction

At the end of chapter two, I suggest that a very specific Human Trafficking Discourse (HTD) organized and constrained the speeches at a 2011 UN meeting. Though the speakers were there to discuss innovative approaches to addressing the problem of human trafficking, every invited speaker conflated the victims of human trafficking with women, and the phenomenon of human trafficking with sex trafficking. By narrowing the issue to women and sex, HTD obscures the parameters of a bigger problem. In chapter one, I suggested that HTD potentially obfuscates the problem due to a global power play in order to hide the massive labor exploitation issues haunting a neoliberal world system. In chapter two, after showing what HTD in action looks like, I suggested that this HTD is used strategically by some international feminists seeking voice, that it is easily taken up by other speakers and listeners due to a specific gender episteme undergirding it, and last that it misrepresents the scope of the problem. HTD is not revolutionary, nor feminist, because it objectifies and reifies "women" in general (as bodies to be used) and ignores sex workers' agency. HTD also disregards the potential victimization of men by ignoring forms of trafficking of which men are more likely to be the victims.

This dissertation research is an attempt to grapple with HTD to better understand its salience. What better way to trace the discourse than to follow it into a safe house for trafficked women? HTD as discourse in the mythos is one thing, spoken in a room of privileged activists who deny the complexity of trafficking, potentially engaging in

symbolic violence by negating the experiences of many. What happens to HTD when the activists are faced with the varied realities of trafficking, however? In this chapter, I describe my ethnography in a safe house for trafficked women. What I find is a tenuous, almost superficial relationship between HTD and the interactions and structure of the house. This is not the finding I expected, so after describing the safe house, I explore the power relationships that emerged there and how they resulted in a reinforcement of house hierarchies predicated by house rules and epistemic orientation.

In section one of this chapter, I describe the safe house for trafficked women in greater detail including how it materialized and what typical days looked like when I was conducting my observations. Section two describes how a very precise hierarchy is enacted in the safe house. In short, a specific order is maintained in the house via a reduction of the residents agency both in the house and as they move outside the house. Using the metaphor of the gift from Mauss's "The Gift," I show how this hierarchy can be uncomfortable for both residents and helpers. I also show what residents' resistance to the prescribed hierarchy looks like. In section three, I detail the rules of the house to show how the very structure of the home, conceptualized and institutionalized prior to residents setting foot in the house, mutually established and reinforced hierarchy within the house. Once a solid picture of the interactions and structure of the house has been established, I then turn my attention to the following question: how does HTD inform the house structure or house interactions? Thus, in section four, using the concept of cloistering, I theorize why the founders chose the "protective" rules that they did. I find that at the

core of this protection is not HTD, but rather a very traditionalist Catholic gender project which draws on the same epistemic bedrock of domesticated womanhood as HTD.

HOPE House

HOPE House materialized following an "anti-human trafficking" conference in 2007, at a moment when the issue of trafficking was gaining traction in the media. From news articles to television shows to major motion pictures, the specter of sex trafficking, often used synonymously with the term human trafficking, was a hot button topic for the general public. In these venues, human trafficking as sex slavery utilizing the specific trope of the young, raped girl-woman kept in squalid conditions captured a national if not global imagination.

The founders themselves were already interested in sex trafficking, and had been strategizing for over a year, prior to the 2007 conference, as to how to fuse the issue of CSE, especially to help US born women in prison for prostitution charges, with HTD. Because HTD narrowed the issue of human trafficking to sex trafficking, HTD became a powerful vehicle for the founders of HOPE House to further their own cause of abolitionism.

Table 2: Comparison of Discourse as Mythos, HTD and CSE

	HTD Mythos	CSE Mythos
Subjects	Traffickers, Male Purchasers of Sex, The Nation-State Enforcers, Rescuers and Healers	Pimps, Male Purchasers of Sex, Healers and Guardians

Object	"Trafficked" poor women and girls involuntarily sold for sex, mainly from global south or post-Communist countries.	"Exploited" poor women and girls involuntarily sold for sex, mostly US-born.
Problem	Poverty, crossing international borders illegally, male vice	Violence against women perpetrated by men
Enforcement Solution	Close or monitor borders, prosecute traffickers	Prosecute domestic "traffickers"
Solution for the Women	Treat sex workers as victims in law, visas while testifying against traffickers, provide spaces for healing and job training, heal trauma	
Trope	Boyfriend trafficker (trusting young women who "don't know their being trafficked") and suicide of young trafficked women.	Pimped women turn to drugs to erase the pain
Episteme	Women are "always already" a victim (weak, no agency); a woman's place is in the home. If she must work, then *provide* job opportunities for her. An essentialized conception of womanhood is based on traditional notions of gender.	Sexual purity is necessary for women to be whole. Cloistering from outside world is best way to treat impurity. An essentialized conception of womanhood is based on traditional notions of gender.

The attendees of the conference from which HOPE House would crystallize[31] were not merely consuming the imaginations of the media and general public. They were seasoned social service workers with a great deal of empathy and a strong Catholic faith. One founder, a Catholic Nun, was a former midwife who had practiced in Bangladesh for

[31] The seeds for this safe house had been sown by the founders over a few years of meeting about the issue prior to the conference; the conference was the galvanizing force.

over ten years. Another early influence on HOPE House, also a Catholic nun, was a trained nurse and hospital administrator and had spent many of her years in Lebanon and Palestine. Additionally, a defense attorney named Carol Brennan, also Catholic, had spent decades working for women charged with prostitution offenses. What these founders also had in common was abolitionist feminism. They saw all sex work as trafficking. "According to Donna Hughes," Sister Marjory once said, "all prostituted women are trafficked." As a group, the founding helpers sought to abolish the institution of prostitution.

Galvanized by the conference in 2007, and via recommendations by the Federal Bureau of Investigations and Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, HOPE House went from dream to reality in only two years. The founders, with their networks, were able to purchase an old residence for one dollar from an order of nuns downsizing their operations in the city. The structure was situated in a historically Black, working-class and poor section of the city. Relying on donations, the founders renovated the house to bring it up to code, as it was to become a registered safe house. The result was a beautiful, three-story Victorian on a quiet, if slightly dilapidated and blighted, street of a large city on the East Coast. A large, wooded backyard would eventually be landscaped by some local college student volunteers and a smaller front yard was filled with rose bushes and other perennial flowers and plants. Situated on the corner, dense, tall shrubs lined the side of the yard and an old, charming wrought iron fence and gate delineated the home from the main street. The front porch was normally void of decorations or chairs, as it was in full view of the street, though at times a small cat adopted by the residents

and staff would while away the warmer days there and a snowshovel lay on the porch during the colder months.

HOPE House had nine bedrooms on the second and third floors. Each room had a bed, a window, a locking door (from the inside), and a set of drawers. The first floor included a formal dining room, a kitchen, a utility room and bathroom off the kitchen, a grand staircase, a living room, and behind the living room a series of offices (three rooms) and another full bathroom for staff. As a legal "safe house," the address was kept confidential and staff or a designated volunteer was always required to be on the premises. The front door was always kept locked. The back door led out to a little patio area where residents would sit on the back stoop and smoke cigarettes. Beyond the stoop was a huge, tree covered yard which was home to a great deal of mosquitoes in the moist summer months. An old garage at the back of the lot had been turned into yet another meeting space and smelled unbearably of mold in the summer. On one wall of this garage-turned-meeting-room was a mural of a woman, dressed in white with arms outstretched, standing in front of a house, illuminated by sunlight and seemingly beckoning all who enter to receive her kindness.[32]

The originating conference was hosted by the Council for Catholic Bishops[33] and the Catholic imprint upon HOPE House remains to this day as it is in large part staffed

[32] This, the first logo of HOPE House, struck me as religious from the start suggesting imagery of Jesus opening his arms to his followers. Recognizing the religious imagery in the first logo, the founders changed the logo about a year into providing services to one which appeared more secular. It was, however, emotionally difficult for the founders and staff to let go of the first image which had meant a great deal to them: hence the mural in the meeting room. This first logo also is used on the website.

[33] The Council for Catholic Bishops pledged financial support to HOPE House for a limited amount of time, including a certain amount for the internationally trafficked women for the first year they were there, though eventually most basic needs would be provided for the women by the state and the house was

and run by Catholic nuns of various orders. It is important to note, however, that HOPE house is not officially a Catholic entity, nor is it officially Christian. In fact, the staff and active board members of HOPE House are adamant that HOPE House remain non-religious. In this way, HOPE House appears unique in that much of anti-trafficking activism has an explicit proselytizing Christian mission connected to the helping. By eschewing an overt Christian requirement (such as prayer at meals, etc), the founders intended to create a space where the women's needs come first – all women are to be accepted there if they are victims of CSE regardless of where they have come from or where they are going.

HOPE House opened its doors in 2009 and it was designed from the outset to house not only non-US born trafficked women, but also women born in the US who were victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), which according to the founders was any woman involved in prostitution. Roughly half of the nine beds were designated for each group. As one founder noted to me, when the doors opened in 2009, they waited. Both the FBI and ICE were to refer women to the home and yet it took some time to receive even one woman. Eventually, an Eastern European woman briefly took up residence at HOPE House and soon a few other women from other countries would trickle in and then out; the beds were not on a waiting list by any means. In telling me the history of the house, Sister Marilyn had expressed to me, "They are just not finding the women…" Of the approximately 11 women which the house took in during its first year of operation (the number varied depending on who I talked to), only one was granted

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operated via grants and gifts. Per my knowledge of the operating budget, the house received no funds directly from the federal government to house any of the women.

a T-visa. All of the other "international" women fled the home to, it was presumed, escape deportation or their traffickers though the real reasons are not known to me. Only a few of the first residents (one staff person thought it was two or three) maintained prolonged contact with the staff who oversaw the house. When I first visited the home a year and a half after its opening, over half the beds were empty and there were no "international" women living there, though it was serving as a home to three women born in the US who where exiting the prison system, aging out of a life of prostitution and working to overcome narcotics addictions.

Just one day before my volunteer orientation session, a group of "international"[34] women from the same country and trafficked in the same residence arrived at HOPE House. Though a lot of the details would remain private to the women themselves, or just among the few women who worked for the house, some information was known to all. These "international" women had been "found" by authorities in a relatively rural part of the United States and had been trafficked globally as domestic help. The "international" women would stay longer than the previous "international" women who had resided in HOPE House. In fact, eventually all three would graduate into their own living spaces following over a year of residency in the house. These three women were different from the previous international women because they stayed for a long term, but also because they were not the type of women the founders thought they would be receiving when they planned the details of the house: they were not sex trafficked, nor

[34] I choose not to identify their nation of origin in order to maintain their confidentiality. I recognize that a term like "international" has varied meanings, I use it here to point to the fact that these women were from a different country than the one in which they were "found." Erasing the nationality of any person, especially in a situation such as after surviving being trafficked, is incredibly problematic. However, I do so to maintain the utmost level of confidentiality possible for the residents.

were they struggling with addictions. They were all middle-age or older and Muslim. One was receiving treatment for cancer when she entered the house. In addition to their mother tongues, they spoke limited Arabic and no English. Additionally, at least one of the women was in touch with her family back home. A core group of US-born women also arrived around the same time. In contrast to the "international" women, the US-born women shared addiction to narcotics and a past as street-based sex workers – or, as the house founders would call them, victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

When I arrived at HOPE House as a volunteer, I immediately noted that none of the residents fit the trope of HTD. None of them were young (one appeared to be in her 30s; the rest in their 40s or 50s). None were naïve. The "international" women hadn't officially experienced sex trafficking and the US born women were not puppets of pimps. Instead, before me walked, sat, ate and talked, six to eight women whose lives were complicated to say the least. As a volunteer, I would serve as the "one in charge" at times when no staff person could be on the premises. I also worked with the executive director on identifying and writing for grants to fund the house and eventually served on their development committee.

A typical time at the house would include entering the house at five in the evening at which point the house staff, the executive director, house manager and sometimes a social worker, would ready themselves to leave. Often, the executive director and the house manager would stay on for another hour or so before leaving. Often a resident or two would be in the living room watching the television or on the back stoop smoking a cigarette. Another resident or two would be busy in the kitchen preparing dinner for all

the residents. They would set the table and call everyone to eat at six in the evening. Due to the high number of Catholic Nuns who also acted as volunteers for the house, one time one of the "international" women came to find me in the living room, beckoning me to dinner with, "Sister, come."

Dinner was often a quiet affair but the bond among the women was strong. The meals varied from delicious and fresh to downright terrible. Once, an organization donated a sack of chicken wings to the house and there was virtually no meat on the bones. The residents actually laughed at this, and two held their meatless wings up, pretending they were flying. Other times, the "international" women would make food that was "too hot" for a resident named Stephanie and Stephanie would let them know in a voice so deadpan I was never sure if she was really complaining or just teasing the "international" women. If I was there at dinner time, I always ate with the residents because they always offered. However, they seldom engaged me in conversation and I found most dinners I attended to be quiet; we ate swiftly and then we cleaned up. As I became more acquainted with the residents, they did engage in conversation with me more.

The living room normally had at least one US-born resident in it, watching a crime drama or soap opera on the television. In the living room I witnessed a great deal of brief physical touch between the "international" women and the US-born women. This revealed to me a fairly tight cohesion among the group as a whole, though one resident, the most gregarious of the "international" women, was considered "crazy" by all the

other residents though they all also seemed to look out for her. She had also gotten into a physical altercation with one of the "international" women with whom she'd arrived.

Sometimes, an English tutor or translator would be present. The English tutor, a Catholic nun, would sit with the "international" women in the dining room and help them work on their English skills. Tutors for GED tests also came from time to time; most of the US-born residents were working on their GED. Often at seven in the evening, some of the residents would attend a Narcotics Anonymous meeting in the neighborhood.

Eventually, the night staff person would arrive, sometimes early, sometimes right at 8. The residents tended to enjoy the night staff person and would gather in the living room for a while to talk. At this point, I would pack up my things and leave. While I found many of the US-born women would say "hello" to me in a very disaffected way with no emotion or energy I found that all of them were much more emotive with their goodbye to me. At times they would watch me walk to my car; other times they would not.

I refer to two "groups" of people in the house. The first are the residents. The US-born residents were identified by the criminal justice system and called HOPE House home as a way to serve their probation or to transition out of prison. The "international" women were placed in HOPE House by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. While the US born women were under a more watchful eye of a "half way house" the "international" women were not locked in and were told they could leave at any time. The goal was to make HOPE House a home, not a jail. Most of the US-born residents

appeared to be white. During my time there, three of approximately 10 US-born women were African American.

A second constant group in the house was "the helpers." I use this term to encompass the staff, volunteers and active board members who moved about the house freely in order to maintain it. I was a helper because I was a volunteer. At times, I will refer to the actual position or title of the helper (for example, if they are a founder) when it is warranted. Overall, the vast majority of long-term helpers were white Catholic nuns. In addition, a few other white women volunteered on a regular basis and there was a white part-time social worker and a white trauma counselor. The night staff were mostly African American women and two weekend day staff members were white.

Enacting Hierarchy

As is the case with many institutions of "poverty management" like shelters and halfway houses, a very specific incantation of hierarchy infused HOPE House (Hoffman and Coffey 2008). Furthermore, in women-focused institutions which are also staffed by women, power relations between residents and staff are often swept under the rug (Haney 2010). While the helpers of HOPE House came from an orientation of empathy, the interactions between the helpers and residents was more often a complicated mix of care and social-class based hierarchy. In this incantation of hierarchy, the residents were often treated as adolescents and were expected to "act" deferential – in other words, eschew their own agency in order to keep peace in the house. This section explores what deferential interactions looked like between helpers and residents.

Residents *and* helpers both reinforced the social hierarchy of the house. The power structure was sometimes clearly "top-down" but at other times the residents

willingly deferred to helpers. For example, at times the residents treated the helpers like "older, wiser" members of the house, and they would seek their approval or blessing. For example, upon learning how to use the computer, Angela, a resident, found some helpful websites dealing with addiction. "Sister Rose! You gotta see this!" she called out. Sister Rose was working on administrative tasks in the adjacent room. Angela was excited by the information she had found and wanted to share it – not with other residents who were also in the room with her, but with a helper. When another resident, Judy, was preparing to move out, she unexpectedly saw Carol Brennan in the dining room. Carol called her over, and they hugged. Judy then sat down and they leaned in to each other, spoke in hushed tones, each smiling and clearly happy to see each other. Carol praised Judy for all the good work she had done and Judy was clearly pleased to receive her praise. These examples are not negative: they show support of the residents, and residents relying on the support, which is part of the core mission of the house. However, this showing of support only flowed one-way, from helper to resident, and it appeared to have an effect, over time, of metaphorically placing the residents in a social space of "less than" and the helpers in a position of domination and knowing.

The complicity of helpers and residents taking scripted roles of support becomes problematic when the house philosophy of "my way or the highway" infused interactions. For example, when Angela once asked for help with the computer, Sister Marilyn, always a bit dry and disaffected in her speech, told Angela that she would "be with [her] in a moment." Over the next half an hour, Angela asked for help a few more times but Sister Marilyn always had other things to do first and gave no indication as to what "a moment"

looked like. Consensus regarding the hierarchy implied in the interaction is key here: Angela consented to waiting and because this was par for the course in many other institutionalized interactions in her life, she was used to waiting with no information.[35]. She didn't lash out, or ask for clarification: she dutifully waited. Whether she liked it or not, her consensus as the "one who waits" was necessary to maintain the hierarchy in this space.

The hierarchy was present in the house even when no residents were around to experience it. Once, when it was just Sister Marilyn, Sister Rose and me on the main floor, the house cat ambled slowly through the dining room where I was seated with Sister Rose and then into the kitchen. I wrote in my field notes:

> *"At this moment Sister Marilyn is walking into the kitchen as well. She sees the kitty and makes a kind clicking sound to it. Sister Rose says, in a lighthearted way, 'She is spoiled!' And Sister Marilyn quips in a jovial way, 'It is a prerequisite for living here!'"*

This lighthearted banter among staff indicates the depth of belief that residents were there to be helped and not to help themselves. The women residents of the house are anything but spoiled and everyone, including the helpers, knows it. The residents' origins are rife with some constellation of exploitation, imprisonment, perhaps addiction. These residents seem to be working hard to either learn English or obtain a GED. They make all their appointments and dutifully urinate in a cup for their probation officers on a regular basis. But "the spoiled child" is a common narrative among families – especially those with more religiously conservative views on children: spare the rod, spoil the children.

[35] For example, Angela once told me a story about waiting for her probation officer for over two hours and she had no choice, she just had to wait. She told me she got angry at the "woman at the window" that day, but she still had to wait.

Calling the residents "spoiled" was part halfhearted joke, but partly not. The residents do not pay any money to live there, they do not pay the gas or the electric bills. The eat using SNAP benefits. They do not hold paying jobs. In my time there, I will attest that Sister Marilyn cares deeply for the residents and has devoted her life to caring for those less fortunate. Sister Marilyn is smart and communicated to me often that she is critical of a human trafficking discourse which hurts more than it helps. But Sister Marilyn is also a product of her culture. Her quip indicates not a truth she believes in – she knows the residents aren't spoiled – but rather a knee-jerk reliance on a hierarchy of who was capable of knowledge infused the house. In this case, the "children" are cared for and get a free ride so that presumably they will grow up and start their own homes.

I observed many instances where the residents were treated less like equals and more like misbehaving adolescents in a family situation. In the following example, one of the "international" residents, Asmawati, is preparing to move out.

> *Sister Rose tells me, as Asmawati busies herself in the kitchen, that Asmawati is looking to move out. "She's talking about borrowing 400 to do so." Sister Rose says, "She has money, so I hope she's not borrowing." Asmawati returns with some food, sits casually next to where Sister Rose and I have our computers, and explains a railroad type place, kitchen, bath, living room and bedroom, all in a row. The apartment is in the same neighborhood. "I don't want her so close," says Sister Rose later when it is just her and me.*
>
> *…Asmawati then asks Sister Rose for plates for her move and Sister Rose says you GOT plates for Christmas, as if Asmawati is asking for too much. And Asmawati says, "No, only pot, pot, pot. No plate."*
>
> *Sister Rose does more teasing with Asmawati – much of it is in Arabic. "Where do you pray? Your room is FULL of boxes and suitcases (she'd gone in to get an air conditioner).*

As shown in the excerpt above, written just a few weeks before Asmawati moved out, Asmawati was teased and judged by Sister Rose, and not just on this occasion. In

fact, Sister Rose was quick to make note of the idiosyncrasies of many of the residents, from teasing about saying "meetin'" instead of meeting, or commenting on the perceived negative health value of their food ("how can you eat that?").

While teasing about cleaning one's room is one thing, telling me later that she didn't want Asmawati to live so close goes beyond teasing. The comment suggested a level of discomfort with helping women who were already more fully agentic than the perceived former sex workers were. Indeed, one of Sister Rose's most coveted programs was a halfway house for women easing out of the transition from HOPE House and into a sustainable life. And yet, with Asmawati she states that she wished she wouldn't live so close. I will discuss this in more depth in section four.

At times, assertions of hierarchy by staff became heated in that domination and denial of residents' agency occurred. In celebrating Sister Rose's birthday, the "international" women purchased a large collection of new clothes from a department store to give to her: a few shirts, a jacket and some pants. Upon opening the gift, Sister Rose became visibly upset, even angry, that they'd spent any money on her. "You should not be spending this on me!" she exclaimed, a mixture of irritation and displeasure in her voice and on her face. She had a difficult time even saying thank you for the gift and did not. The American residents who were also there to celebrate the birthday were trying to coach Sister Rose in how to accept a gift, saying, "It's what they do! It's in their culture!" Sister Rose, however, would not accept this prodding and instead went into great detail as to her small room and closet and how it can't fit any new clothes.

While Sister Rose refused to receive she gifts, she constantly gave of her time, self, and money. She worked at HOPE House for a stipend rather than a salary, six days a week for ten to twelve or more hours a day for the house. She gave gifts to the residents on many occasions. For example, she gave a resident, Stephanie, on the first anniversary of being clean, a beautiful necklace purchased with her own funds and a framed poem about strength and moving forward on life's journey. She delighted in the annual Thanksgiving party, where all the volunteers were invited over for food and conversation. She always had a gift for my son at the holidays and sometimes a gift for me as well.

By refusing the gifts of the "international" women, even as the rest of us tried to show her how to gracefully accept such a kindness, she established a one-way flow of material gifts: she gave, she did not receive. As Bourdieu (1991) notes in his discussion of gift giving and symbolic power, by not receiving the gift of the giver, Sister Rose engaged in a symbolic power play, a reassertion of a her place at the top of the hierarchy. Rather than accept kindness from the people she is purported to help, thereby recognizing their shared humanity, Sister Rose rails against the gifts. Her message is swift, it seems. The residents were not to give, they were solely to receive; Sister Rose was to give and not to receive. In this way, Sister Rose underscored a forced passivity of the residents and kept them "in their place" as less than, as children, as victims. At the same time, she also enforced a level of dominance she had in this social field. They were not equals and her discomfort and anger was a way to reestablish the social hierarchy in this space. The "international" women did not indicate any emotional response back to Sister Rose.

However, the power of a narrative and an enforcement of domination can be damaging to those who lack the power in the interaction (McCorkel 2013).

Sister Rose cared deeply for the mission of the house and showed committed caring to each and every member of the house. There are no doubt many reasons why she denied the gifts of the international women including her own social location in life rife with hierarchy; her intent was not to impose domination. Regardless of intent, however, this lack of the residents' ability to express reciprocity, as determined by Sister Rose, was a form of symbolic power (Bourdieu 1991) that resulted in maintaining the social hierarchy of house. This maintenance of a set of power relations, where the residents were at times treated like adolescents rather than adult women, denied them, in a micro-interactional way, control over their own living spaces and reasserted the residents lack of agency in the house. Again, it must be underscored that there are myriad and unknown reasons for why Sister Rose rejects the gift in that moment, and her intent was not to further disempower the residents of the house. However, via "small" public reactions such as a refusal of the gift, Sister Rose does forcibly reinforce a top-down hierarchy in the house. In some situations, the rejection of residents' agency was not veiled at all.

> *Asmawati comes in to the house. It is a casual afternoon and all of the residents are either upstairs or out. Asmawati is dressed very nice, looks quite professional. Sister Rose beckons her in to the dining room, then says to me, "Tell her to come in here." I get her and Asmawati comes in. I don't hear what Sister Rose wants, but then Asmawati asked her about changing her phone to [a different carrier] – for international long distance to call her family – and Sister Rose breaks the scene with Asmawati to look at me and explains that "They don't understand. I tried to get them to use [a different company] but even with [the translator], they don't understand. They can't call long distance with that company!" I am uncomfortable with Sister Rose breaking in the middle of*

conversation with Asmawati to face me and explain in great detail how "they" don't understand. I have to look away. I can't smile through this.

While all of the residents expressed caring for the Sister Rose and the other helpers in the house, many residents, even those that made it through the entire program, expressed discontent with the reduction of agency at times - from mild to great. The residents were aware of their status as "unknowing adolescents" in the house and rejected it on various occasions. As I write in my field notes of a dining situation:

Then they are laughing about Sister Rose bossing Kusuma around in the kitchen. Angela and Stephanie are chuckling, Kusuma is busily working. "Kusuma wants Sister Rose to get out of her hair, I know it," says Angela.

Stephanie says, "Yeah, I remember last Thanksgiving, they wouldn't let me go home and I was so mad. And I wanted turkey, and macaroni and cheese made from scratch, not a box, and the gravy. Sister Rose tried to tell me how to make the gravy. I got this, I told Sister Rose." Just then Sister Rose walks in the dining room and does some sort of busy work, I think she was eavesdropping, where we are eating and we all hush, like school girls. Eventually Stephanie finishes her story. "I told her, I got this. And she thought it was delicious!"

Another time, I was discussing a recent assault of one of the "international" women – she'd been pushed down and blacked out and lost her purse. I'd noticed that there was a great deal of cohesion and tenderness among the residents, in spite of some significant and physical fighting between two of the "international" women. So I asked:

"Do you understand the 'International' women? It's hard for me", I say.

"Yeah, I do", says Angela. "I also look a lot at their body language."

And then we get on Asmawati.

"The sisters won't listen to me," says Angela. But I tell them that Asmawati is looking for a husband and is way too friendly with some of the men around here. And the crossing guard said she's talking to some woman often up there. Maybe

that woman set her up."

"She's a vic," says Stephanie.

Angela elaborates. "If I was on the street, listen, I've done it! It makes me mad because they don't listen to me. But if I met her when I was on the street, she'd be in some crack den with me and I'd have her believing me, and I'd get her money and she'd leave some way or another."

"They don't listen to you?" I ask, hoping to get more clarification.

" Yeah, what do I know. I'm just a resident." Angela says this a few times. I'm just a resident. We talk a little more about them not listening and Angela ventures that maybe they do listen to her, but they don't know what to do about it... Angela and Stephanie also tell me about the drug deals going on outside the front and side of the house. Angela is very clear that she is smart, and that she knows she's smart and that this is why it makes her mad that they (nuns) won't listen.

Angela's comment that she's "just a resident" is a window into a way in which the residents recognized the hierarchy of the house, in which residents, due to being residents, were "less than" the helpers. Because they were perceived by others as "less than," the agency of the residents was thus limited in that the helpers asserted to know more than the residents. This hierarchy in interactions, however, stemmed from more than just the personalities or material circumstances of residents and helpers. In other words, it was not "personal." The hierarchy is embedded in the rules of the house which were created long before any resident ever called HOPE House "home."

Before residents and helpers: House Rules

Hope House is a safe house. By design, it was set up to protect residents, to keep them safe from outside forces. This meant that the address was kept secret and that "helpers" would always be on the premises. The rules of the house attempt to further this goal of protection of residents from the outside world, as well as from themselves and

harmful behaviors some residents had previously engaged in, by protecting the insides of the residents' bodies from bad behaviors. The result, I suggest, is potentially about protection but also includes an unintended consequence of the construction of the hierarchy identified above, where the helpers are elevated as protector, as gaze and as knowing, while the residents are constructed as needing protection, tough love, and as un-knowing. In this section I explore house rules and how they create an unintended but very real hierarchy among helpers and residents that, as I showed in the previous section, becomes infused in the interactions of residents and helpers.

When residents first arrived at HOPE House, they endured a month long "blackout" which, by the end, tended to be very difficult for most residents. Blackout meant that they could only leave the house under supervision, and then only for required meetings and appointments. Blackout could be re-instated if residents didn't obey terms of their placement as well. Terms of placement were not something I was privy to, but the one time I witnessed a reinstatement of blackout was when a resident began railing against the structure and rules of HOPE House. I only learned much later why she "got blackout" (see Sarah's story in the next vignette) but when I came in for my shift, the staff made sure to tell me about it and further to tell me that "she's not happy about it" – indicating that I would potentially have to deal with an unhappy resident that night. Once the residents were removed from blackout, they had relatively more ability to come and go, though they were to log all their trips out of the house in a log book, kept in the living room, so that the staff knew where they were at all times. Blackout, and the overall monitoring of the comings and goings of residents, served to inform the residents that

they were not anonymous, they were being watched, presumably for their own good though the residents often expressed discomfort at or resistance to this constant monitoring.

Another rule that further distinguished the residents and helpers is that residents were not supposed to answer the door[36] or answer the phone. In this way, residents were constantly reminded that there was a group of women in this space who were better able to manage the outside world (the helpers who came and went without monitoring).

Residents were not allowed to keep or take any medication on their own, including over the counter pills, and had to log, in yet another logbook, when they took their meds, morning, noon, and night. Each resident's set of pills was divided into pill boxes, which were divided by day as well as AM and PM; the staff did the organizing of the pills. Pain killers such as Advil and Tylenol were also kept under lock and key. There was an elaborate, three or four step hiding process of the keys and I routinely forgot where the final cabinet key was hidden, or they'd change the hiding spot, and I would have to call the on-call staff to find the key. I would then have to lock the door – residents waiting for pills on the other side – and then follow the intricate directions of a staff or board member on the phone. In truth, because the act of controlling and taking medicine was such an intimate concept for me, I found the idea of doling out medicine to the residents particularly distasteful and dreaded the moment when I would have to do so.

I avoided the task for quite awhile, that is, until I took shift on a Sunday morning. The night staff would leave as soon as I got there at six in the morning and so there I was, one morning, left to dispense medications which I felt no authority in dispensing. The

[36] Though, as the residents became comfortable in the house, sometimes they did answer the door.

residents knew more about their medications than I did, and yet here I had to take on the role of watcher. Of that morning, I wrote in my field notes:

> *Asmawati comes into the front office where I'm sitting and pulls my hand gently to the back office – right to the closet where all the keys are kept, including the keys for the medicine cabinet. And then she looks and waits, but she doesn't see the keys or doesn't feel comfortable going to the little lock box to get the keys… Whatever the case, I shrug and say, I don't know. Because I don't and also, there's an air of secrecy about where the keys are kept and I feel compelled to keep the nuns' secret. I'll call Sister Marjory, I say.*
>
> *Sister Marjory is on call. She has two phone numbers listed and doesn't answer either. I leave messages on both phones. I then call Sister Marilyn. She answers. Her voice always surprises me – it sounds cold and uninterested at first, and then warms up quickly. Sister Marilyn tells me to shut the office door, and then instructs me through a four step process to identify where the keys are kept, and how to do the log book.*
>
> *Kusuma is in the living room so I invite her in to get her pills. She waits for me to open the pill box and hand her the pills, instead of opening the pill box herself. I'm not even sure if she knows what the letters on the box mean because they are letters for the week in English. She may or may not. I don't like handing her the pills (kind of intimate), emotionally, and so instead I just open the little "door" to Sunday's pills and put it down so that she can take her own pills out.*
>
> *Based on other signatures in the book, the "international" women don't sign the meds book – the staff member does. So anyhow, I sign for Kusuma, and then organize the meds on the shelf in the wardrobe. I put Kusuma's in the little plastic basket and lay out the others that still need to be given.*
>
> *Asmawati has disappeared but comes down a little later to get her meds. I hand the pill box to Asmawati - kind of experimenting on the whole pill/agency hypothesis I've got forming. She takes the box, tentatively, making me think she doesn't normally take part in obtaining her pills, and asks which slot to open. "Saturday?" she asks. "No, Sunday," I say, and point to the correct S. I sign the book for her.*

The locking of all pills is telling of the hierarchy. For example, the "international" women were not addicted to narcotics and yet had to ask, and wait, for morning and evening medication. While it is possible that this rule emerged from preexisting rules

about safe houses and were not based on the founders perceptions of the women, the potentially perceived message is the same. The women who were recovering from addiction to narcotics were also kept from handling all pills without supervision, including pills that were not narcotics. In this way, all of the residents were treated as a cohesive group (though their circumstances for being there varied drastically), unable to manage pills of any sort because they are residents.

The locking of the medicine cabinet taught me two primary lessons. First, the fact that the medicine is kept locked from the residents communicates a lack of trust in the residents' abilities to manage their own medication and also highlights that some residents are addicts and thus not to be trusted with any kind of pill.[37] In this simple way, the residents must ask for something that they physically require from a person "in charge." This act clearly reinforces an a dynamic of residents lack of agency, daily, where the helper has the knowledge and the resident must rely on the helper for a basic need. A second lesson of the medicine cabinet comes from my own discomfort with being in charge of such an intimate bodily detail. One or two times a day, the residents are to present their bodies to the helpers to receive medication upon which their bodies rely. In this way, the reduction of residents' agency takes on an even greater meaning because the helpers not only control the space in which their bodies move, but the residents' bodies as well. Monitoring and logging medications might seem like a no-nonsense rule to insert into a space where some residents are dealing with very real and very powerful addiction issues. However, in a situation where the founders ultimately

[37] I have often wondered if there were external rules enforced on safe houses that housed individuals with addiction which might have led to the locking up of pills in the house. Regardless of where the rules come from, however, the messages taken, by both groups, reinforced the hierarchy in the house.

assert that all the women are victims, to further place the residents as a whole into a space where their very bodies are yet again controlled by another is the exact opposite of the mission of the house.

Some of the rules attempted to create a "family" atmosphere. The residents were required to share the evening meal with each other, and the duty for making the meal was assigned to different residents every night. This evening meal requirement became problematic during Ramadan when the Muslim residents were not eating the evening meal. During this time, it was decided they would not have to help cook or be required to sit at the table. The house also had a first floor cleaning regimen that the residents shared but their bedrooms were their own domain (though Sister Rose "teased" them about their messy rooms often when I was there). The residents were also expected to attend organized outings and other group events, like weekly Pilates. Twice, I was privy to discussions between the residents expressing their wish to *not* go on an outing. Both times, the resident who didn't want to go did go after receiving pressure from the helpers.

Sister Marilyn often urged me to show the residents how to budget, teach them about calories or sodium in food, or suggest activities other than watch TV. To the residents, she often expressed distaste, along with the other mostly older staff, regarding what the residents ate. For example, she was flabbergasted when the "international" residents purchased large boxes of ramen packets. "They don't know about the salt," she expressed. Multiple times, as I sat down to share the evening meal with the residents, the residents would also ask Sister Marilyn and Sister Rose to sit and eat but both always declined and instead would bustle about the house. Overall, there was a great deal of

concern over what the residents put into their bodies and how they made their food in the first place. Sister Rose once gave me some beautiful loaves of whole grain artisan bread that had been donated. "Are you sure?" I asked, hesitant to take the donated food. "Yes! They won't eat the brown stuff," she said while shaking her head in a disappointed way. The residents came from very different lifestyles so their food intake was different from the helpers' ideas about what was good and healthy, and so the helpers often tried to "teach" this new knowledge to them via overt criticism of their food choices or refusing to eat the food the residents prepared.

The house rules acted in reinforcing the gaze of the helpers which in turn reinforced the ways in which the helpers used and communicated their gaze. For example, the back offices were off limits to the residents unless they were with a helper. However, the only way to get to the back offices was to move through the front door and living room. In this way helpers moved freely through the residents' space, but residents did not have the same option. Beyond the entry and living room were glass doors that could be closed and a small anteroom between the living room and the larger office behind it. In the large back office, there was a logbook where staff and volunteers were encouraged to write down a play by play of the day: when residents came to get medicine, prescription and over the counter, who is happy or sad, when they ate, and other noteworthy events and the emotions of residents based on these noteworthy events. As a volunteer who would be at the house when no other staff was present, I was encouraged to write all of my observations in the log book and also to review it upon arrival to see what the mood of the house was.

In one way, this log book was a way to get me up to speed quickly on the present state of the house and was intended to be a way to ensure that volunteers did not ask the residents any questions about their lives. However, the logbook also informed helpers of the personal lives of the residents. For instance, it is how I learned of Stephanie's one year anniversary of being clean. She told me later, herself, but I already knew. Often, the logbook provided few details if there was an incident that resulted in negative situations for a resident or the house (like, if someone was struggling with their addiction), but there would be much detail on the more mundane information. For example, someone would write if they played cards with a resident, or if a resident was knitting that day. They would also note their perceptions of the emotional state of various residents such as "looked happy" or "seemed tired". Meant as a communication tool to keep residents from experiencing too much overt scrutiny by helpers in the house, the logbook, which was not something the residents knew about, still unintentionally became an instrument of the gaze by situating helpers as those who watched and recorded behaviors.

The rules of the house were meant to protect residents from aspects of their previous lives. Via such rules as blackout and not answering the door, residents were constructed as needing to be wary of the outside and the helpers were constructed as being the interface between the ills of the outside and the safety of the home – inside. But then inside, a different sort of hierarchy materialized via the rules. The residents were stripped of their agency via a surveillance of their comings and goings, of their pill consumption, and of a logging of their emotional states in the "secret" logbook. The rules created the pretense for a reduction in residents' agency, and the behaviors of residents

and helpers mechanized this reduction in agency. But why so many rules to protect versus a different set of rules which could have focused more on honoring residents' agency?

Cloistering and HTD

As noted above, reduction of agency of institutionalized poor individuals is quite common in poverty management programs (Hoffman et al 2008, Haney 2010). However, there is an element of HOPE House's particular protective structure that adds an extra element to the hierarchy : purity. The majority of the founders of HOPE house were profoundly Catholic, even if the house itself is not officially religious, and the founders set out to cloister, or seclude, the residents from the outside world.

While HOPE House might be one of the only "homes for trafficked women" on the East Coast,[38] they often looked to the model of Breaking Free, a house and treatment program in St. Paul, MN, for survivors of CSE and "sex trafficking," to inform their actions. Upheld nationally by many anti-trafficking activists as the gold standard , Breaking Free utilizes HTD more actively on their website than HOPE House does, but their core belief about sex work is the same: commercial sexual exploitation (synonymous with trafficking) is a form of violence against women and must be stopped. Breaking Free has both residential and outpatient programs as well as provides outreach to women not currently in the program. In addition, Breaking Free conducts awareness programs and participates in a safe harbor program for girls charged with prostitution (so they are considered and treated as victims by the law) as well as a John School, a place to teach arrested purchasers of sex about the implications of their purchase. Breaking Free

[38] The number of safe houses for trafficked individuals in the United States is unknown.

includes programs for women who have children, provides childcare during their outpatient programs and has an apartment complex for women of Breaking Free who have graduated from their transitional housing and need more time to prepare a different life. Breaking Free differs from HOPE house in that it was founded and is staffed by many survivors of CSE. Breaking Free is world renowned. In fact, "CSE" and the international abolitionist movement are connected via the founder of Breaking Free: Vednita Carter sits on the board of CATW.

While HOPE House used Breaking Free as a model, it also used the notion of cloistering the residents from all outside influence as a way to provide a healing structure. The helpers paid little discursive attention to the children of residents and completely banned men from the house at all times. In this way, HOPE house added an additional element to the discourse of CSE – that of purity.

HOPE House was constructed to house adult, single women. Women found to be younger than 18 were transferred to other shelters. Men, as an entire group, were barred from the space, unless absolutely necessary. When male workers came to the house to rehabilitate the basement into a series of meeting rooms and offices, at certain times they entered and exited through an external cellar door. Male volunteers were not allowed to enter the space either. Discursively, men were also not allowed. Boyfriends were not discussed while the staff and certain volunteers were present, at least in my company, and it was only when the staff left that the residents would call and chat with their boyfriends or tease each other about the men in their lives.

Additionally, the safe house was not zoned to allow children to stay there with their mothers. Thus, though a woman could potentially self refer to HOPE House, she wouldn't be able to if she had children in her custody. Though I'd been told many times I could bring my son if I needed to, that other volunteers had, the perceptions regarding mothers and children was that children were a nuisance and mothers should only be mothers. Once angry with me for bringing my young son to the house to finish a grant application, Sister Rose raised her voice and stated, "You have no idea! You have a child and you have no idea how much time this takes! You came in today and it took an hour and a half just to get one short letter printed!"

While she had presented an understanding self to me earlier in the day, Sister Rose was frustrated by the time my child had taken from her ability to focus. In that moment of stress, she referred to me as "not knowing" precisely because I had a child. In this way, Sister Rose espoused a deeper moralizing message that I had no business there because I was a mother and this space was for women who either did not have children, or were wealthy enough to hide their children with nannies, or had had their children taken away by the state.

By limiting the space to single women[39], residents were de-sexualized in this space. Not only was she not, presumably, a bearer of children, but she was not a willing sexual actor either. By keeping men outside of the house at all times, an implicit message was sent that men were predators and women needed to be kept away from them or they

[39] Adding children or families to the list of residents at HOPE House would, admittedly, create additional layers of institutional oversight so in part it would seem that limiting the recipients based on certain legal categories (such as age of adulthood as 18) is by far more prudent in serving a broader population and not necessarily based on assumptions and beliefs of the founders. Rather, the founders appeared to be less apt to question these a priori limitations in the first place.

would become prey. Further, the length of the house stay for each resident, up to or exceeding a year, was designed to create a safe place for women to heal and move on from exploitation. Women were assumed to be victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and without family. These assumptions fit neatly into Human Trafficking Discourse (HTD) though the house itself was designed to serve perceived victims of CSE rather than of human trafficking. Human trafficking, because its underlying epistemes fit the epistemes of the founders, became a way to open a safe house for victims of CSE, funded by people and organizations concerned with human trafficking. The founders capitalized on the broader cultural discourse that CSE was the same thing as human trafficking.

By uniting human trafficking with the notion of commercial sexual exploitation of US born women, the founders align themselves with the Western and second wave feminist conceptions of the nature of women and sex work under patriarchy – that it was never a choice and thus always forced. Just as we see in the history of feminism and of Verveer's remarks in chapter two, the use of HTD was strategic for the founders. Women who are victims of CSE were their real focus, but the cultural furor around the titillating issue of sex slavery was a convenient wave to ride. This is not to say that the founders did not believe that CSE and trafficking weren't the same thing. Rather, they did and it was through the general public's imaginations of sex slavery that the founders found a vehicle to further their concerns regarding prostitution.

While it may seem simple, and obvious based on HTD, to open a safe house for women who have been sex trafficked, there is a deeper layer to why the focus on women

and sex trafficking occurs in the first place among the founders of HOPE House (versus agricultural trafficking – generally conceived of as less gendered or trafficking of construction workers, which is seen as a "man's" form of exploitation). Founder Carol Brennan's simple gold cross, her Catholic orientation, her large family and in addition, her own research based on over 25 years as a defense attorney, all congeal to inform her assertions that the prostitution comes first and then drug addiction follows to numb the pain of exploitation. It is not just women whom she is out to help but a version of femininity where women remain pious and chaste unless married. Carol Brennan was the organic intellectual of the founders, asserting via her own interviews with sex workers whom she defended as an attorney, that exploitation and prostitution came first and drug addiction came second. She posits this theory in response to a common assertion that street based sex workers are engaging in sex work to feed an addiction. For Carol, it was the other way around.

There was some dissent from Brennan's theories among those involved in the day to day missions of the house, especially that all the women were victims of CSE. As Sister Rose put it, "After being in the house, I am not so sure…" But this dissent was kept mostly silent and for the most part, the helpers presented their ideas about CSE as a unified group.

The notion of a home for de-sexualized woman might not be so hard to fathom when one considers that it was primarily women of various Catholic orders of nuns, and one Catholic attorney, who started the home. Further, the founders where seasoned social service providers and had been in the business of poverty management for decades, much

longer than the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act that opened federal funding to faith and conversion-based social service providers (Gowan and Atmore 2012). While they were always adamant that all faiths and even no faith were welcome at HOPE House, the religiosity of the house was apparent. In support of this assertion, the House founders actually turned down a large granting source's request because the granting source required that all grant recipients sign on to a pledge to support women in whatever decision they made regarding a pregnancy, including abortion. The founders simply could not bring themselves to go that far – to take money from one of their biggest allies in the fight against trafficking in the city – if they had to support women's choice to terminate a pregnancy on her own accord. They could have signed the pledge, and the organization itself was not in any way designed to be an anti-choice or religious organization. This was a personal decision made by some of the founders.

There was, of course, variation in how closely the various staff aligned themselves with antiquated gender norms that would accompany life inside a convent. For example, some of the residents went to see the Vagina Monologues with two volunteers, who also happened to be Sisters. I write in my field notes:

> *Before Jesse comes in, Sister Rose and I chat about the [Vagina Monologues]. I told her I was surprised to see the poster and Sr. Rose says, "Yes I need to take the sign down. Some members on the board would not approve."*
>
> *"Really? It really is so empowering …" I urge.*
>
> *Sister Rose is pretty sure. "Carol Brennan is *very* Catholic, I am sure she wouldn't approve."*

Jesse comes in because Sister Rose calls to her, and asks about the show. Jesse brightens, and says, "Oh it was wonderful."

And it's almost like she's reporting on it to me and Sr. Rose, in the back office; she is standing and we are sitting. She's talking about how it really made her think about her own body and that she's very happy she went. She told her sister about it, and her sister is going to see it next year.

If the discourse upon which the house was constructed fits an antiquated gender ideal where women are de-sexualized, an outing to a performance of the Vagina Monologues would certainly be counter to the reigning discourse. However, this excerpt shows how one can only go so far resisting the belief systems of the people in power in HOPE House (the board members/founders) to the point where the poster was to be taken down before some of the more religious conservative of them would find out about the outing. Despite the fact that Jesse expressed a sense of empowerment from a well known feminist performance, it was assumed that Carol Brennan would never have approved.

The decision to cloister residents, rather than teach about harm reduction and allow the residents' lives into the house, was based on a series of beliefs about women and poverty management. First, there was the belief that all sex work is trafficking. Second, because all sex work is trafficking, then all sex work is forced either by third party individuals or the constraints placed on impoverished women living in a patriarchal culture. Third, since no woman would ever choose sex work, then all women in any form of sex work are victims. Fourth, men are the purchasers of the sex and thus are the demand leading the supply. It is assumed that if the men know better, for example if they humanize the sex worker in John's schools, then the man will choose not to victimize women via purchasing sex. Part in parcel with the belief of men as sexual agents is the

belief is that women are sexual victims. Based on these beliefs, one might assume that greater agency among the women would be fostered and taught with a goal of teaching the women, once victims, how to protect themselves from the outside world. This is not what the house becomes though. Instead, the house engages in cloistering mixed with standard poverty management regulations. The result is a denial of residents' agency and knowing via the relatively constant devaluing of the residents.

The ill fit between the concept of trafficking and the house was most dramatically exemplified by the ways that the "international" women were discursively and practically shoe-horned in to the space. Because the founders utilized HTD to save women from prostitution, they wound up with trafficked women in their midst. And because human trafficking encompasses far more than sex trafficking, the trafficked women who find their way to HOPE House are absent both from HTD and also from the CSE focus of the house.

Early on in the "international" residents' stay, I mentioned in a development committee meeting the mismatch between the house focus on CSE and how the "international" women were not survivors of sex trafficking but of domestic servitude. One prominent helper declared, "we don't know that," and then asserted that she was pretty sure they had been sex trafficked. But as time went on, the help that Asmawati needed was clearly different from help that the founders had assumed their "international" residents would need. Primarily, Asmawati didn't have issues with addiction, which was a core issue for the US-born women there at that time. But she did

need to find a way to make money and to stay in the US – these needs seemed to become a primary focus for her while she lived in the house.

From my observations, Asmawati did benefit from a place to stay and get her world together following her previous experience. She did well with her English lessons and learned the ways of the city, like where to shop ride the bus, so she could eventually earn money. But Asmawati did not put her life on hold to "heal" while she was at HOPE House either; she continued looking to change her life chances. Other residents told me she was looking for a boyfriend, and that is what she found: a "respectful" man who would marry her.

> *Then Asmawati mentions her boyfriend. She tells Sister Rose about him and later that day Sister Rose said Asmawati had never talked about him with her before. Sister Rose leaves the room for a few minutes and while she is gone, Asmawati tells me more about her boyfriend.*
>
> *She is speaking so hushed, that I don't get all of what she's telling me, so I ask, with a smile," he's nice?" And she says yes, he's a "good man" and explains that he doesn't want to see her without her hijab or even see any part of her bare neck. She asks me to come to the wedding – I say yes! We are sitting at the dining room table and she is eating rice, scooping it up from the plate with three fingers. She looks really happy and content, but also says, "Asmawati cry. Asmawati sad. Asmawati miss Indriani. Asmawati miss Kusuma."*

Asmawati's story, and the role of agency in it, is ever confusing to me. On the one hand, Asmawati knew what she wanted, and she sought it as a strong agent. But as an agent, marriage is not always the best option because it has the potential of placing a woman at the mercy of yet another man. I only know the following: Asmawati was hopeful about her marriage; as a hotel maid, Asmawati worked very long and difficult hours for very little pay and commuted a long distance and many hours a day on multiple buses just to get to and from work. Marriage perhaps looked like the better option.

Asmawati was not treated like an adult in the house, but rather like a teenage girl who still had a lot to learn, despite being over forty years old. The safe house, then, and the options available to her, was precarious to her agency. Despite all of these potentially or intermittently agency-reducing sources, what the Asmawati had was her own resolve.

Asmawati wasn't the only "international" woman to exercise greater agency in the space. For example, Indriani and Kusuma would wait until it was just me in the house, then unlock the front door, and go to the dollar store. They would tell me, "fi mina, ok?" (five minutes, ok) but it wasn't a question. Instead of relying on ringing the door bell, as they were supposed to, they would just make it so that they could enter on their own accord. It's not that the "international" women didn't know the rules, however. The following is an exchange which shows Asmawati's (presumably) humorous engagement with the rules:

> *Asmawati comes for her pills. I'm in the little office behind the living room. She says, "pills." I say, come on along! And she repeats me as we walk to the back room for the pills. I locate her chart in the binder for signatures and then turn to the cabinet to locate her pill box. Asmawati says, in just a nice voice, "Give me money." I turn around and look down and see that she's holding a garden pruning scissors and is wielding them at me with a smile. I laugh, she's smiling. I say, I'll give you pills! And hand her the box. I say Sunday, and point to the Sunday compartment, she takes them out herself and walks away. Huh! Funny joke – but, funny joke…*

Conclusion

The word "trafficked" was never used when the residents of the house were present. Instead, it was used on the public face of the house, the one that was presented to potential funders. The founders and helpers struggled with this mismatch as well. Once, a volunteer on the development committee created a brochure for the house that would be used to seek funding and provide awareness. The brochure had stock photos of

very sad women in it, which bothered the founders. Once the brochure was done, the volunteer resigned from the committee. Following a very inspiring discussion with Sister Rose and Angela, where Angela shared with us some extremely powerful moments of her recovery, Sister Rose grabbed the brochure and held it out to me, stating emphatically, "these pictures aren't real!" In this way, Sister Rose expresses the lack of fit between the realities of the house, and the image they have to present to obtain funds and keep their doors open. Within that year, the brochure was changed along with the website through a re-branding process. The goal of the helpers was to show HOPE House as a place of healing rather than of despair. But enforcement of the house rules told a different story: by treating the residents at times as lesser-knowing "adolescents," the residents were denied control over their live and their bodies. The residents themselves did not always accept this control, but mini-reassertions of control via interactions among staff and residents were often present.

What I found in this house for trafficked women, though, is not HTD. It is not that HTD as discourse doesn't fit with the overall mission and goals of the house. It does. Rather, the reality of human trafficking, and the inclusion of Muslim women trafficked for domestic servitude, complicates not only HTD (which reduces trafficking to sex trafficking) but also the Catholic quest for purity underlying the cloistering project of the house. Additionally, these three very agentic *de facto* trafficked "victims" complicate the notion of what it means to be a trafficked victim.

Once, in a discussion of fundraising during a development committee meeting, some of the seasoned helpers were lamenting a recent woman's donation, where the

woman had emphatically insisted that her money not be used for treating people with drug addictions. One committee member suggested some strategies she'd learned from Alex's Lemonade stand and rejecting those strategies, Sister Judith said, "Kids with cancer! That sells itself!" Everyone in that room knew that HOPE House was full of complicated women who did not fit HTD in the least and everyone in that room also knew that fit or no, HTD is how we got money. In the next chapter, I follow the development committee of HOPE House through a 2 year rebranding process which ends with a fancy gala. HTD, so silent inside the house, takes center stage as the helpers move their focus from the residents of the house to the general public who needs to help fund the house.

Vignette Two: "Ready"

Angela

The first thing I noticed about Angela was her commanding presence and immediate leadership. In fact, I first heard her voice before I saw her. She was out back smoking a cigarette and talking to a few residents. I was in the back office working on a grant application and the window was cracked. It was full summer and hot but the tree covered lot made the day more bearable. The aroma of smoke wafted in, ever so slightly, and mostly I heard murmurs. Then, Angela speaks loud and clear, "I'll be here for a year, then I get my babies." My first experience with Angela shows where she placed her agency in her current situation. She wasn't "placed there" – rather, she'll "be" there. "They" won't "give her back her babies" – rather, she will "get" them.

Angela is a white, middle aged woman and had children ranging in age from 8 years old to a young adult. She had been in and out of the criminal justice system for years due to addiction and prostitution and while the prostitution was of primary importance to the helpers and the key to Angela's supposed victimization, the prostitution aspect of her past was only part of what Angela wanted to deal with. From her, I heard much more about the struggles with addiction. She once told me, with an ironic smile, that she got a one year probation over a decade ago and she was still on that probation because she couldn't stop using, until now that is. What stood out to me was that Angela was very clear from day one in the house that she knew more than the helpers about her situation and so she knew best what she needed to make meaningful change. In fact, more than once she turned the gaze back onto the helpers by noting that they didn't really

understand what it meant to be addicted and to live that life. Gesturing to me one time, she said to one of the staff, "She can try to talk to young girls but they ain't gonna listen to her. Me, I can talk to them straight."

Angela was extremely observant and tried more than once to inform the staff of various issues at the house. As I note in the last chapter, it did upset her when the staff didn't listen (e.g. when she says, "What do I know, I'm only a resident"). When it came to her own issues, she was very clear that whether we listened or not, she was the expert. The helpers had no choice but to concede; indeed she herself had no choice but to concede.

> *"Let me tell you this, Sister Rose. The other day, when I was going to my POs office, I had to get off at city hall – you know what I'm talking about – where you come up and there's all them benches? Well, I got off and came up and I saw two guys smoking crack cocaine. They -"*
>
> *"How'd you know?" asks Sister Rose.*
>
> *"Trust me, Sister. I know," she said with a hint of condescension in her voice. " They got out the rock, I saw the smoke rise in the pipe and I just stopped. My son had just died, and my addiction was talking to me. It came back full force. C'mon, Angela. I stopped and stared. I was frozen. At the meeting, my sponsor says to have a stop sign to come into your head when the addiction is talking loud. And this is NOT ME, Sister. NOT ME, but I saw my sponsor's face, and him saying, grieve however you got to grieve, but don't use. And this is not me, but I walked on. I didn't use. If I had, and I had a couple of bucks on me, I could've asked for a hit, I would have been on the next train up to [the neighborhood]. But I walked on…"*

This is a really telling exchange of how Angela set the parameters for talking about her recovery. Later in this same exchange, Angela declines the suggestion that she should focus more on her GED. She says, "My GED, it'll come. But right now it's all about my recovery." For Angela, her agency is core to her recovery and for whatever reason, she is

able to assert herself while also staying close to house rules. The same goes for dealing with her addiction. Denying her addiction was "not her" but then she walked on. In this way, her agency is a prerequisite for her recovery. Had she enacted a more victim-based narrative or bought into a lack of individual agency brought on by house rules and staff gaze, perhaps the strength wouldn't have been there to fight the addiction in that crucial moment.

Angela did graduate from HOPE House and decided to use her expertise to help other women in her past situation. On one hand, we could see this as the ultimate response in claiming the space as her own. Angela seized control of her situation and of the limitations in the space and made it work for her. But it is also indicative of another aspect of the cloister and systems of poverty management in the United States more generally. Scholars have identified that addiction becomes capital for individuals exiting institutions like drug treatment centers (Snow and Anderson 1993, Gowan 2010). Angela powerfully claiming that she is a "knower" negated many of the messages of being less-than that were unintentionally lobbied at her in the house; Angela used the capital that she claimed overtly and often to create a space of transformation of herself and also for the house. However, as we'll see below, Angela also begins to take up the discourse of the house when she weighs in on Sarah's trajectory in the following story. Angela, by getting further involved in the house and its broader mission, doesn't leave the house entirely and further begins reproducing discourses of the house. This is not the case for Sarah.

Sarah

While Angela was a commanding presence and immediately took a leadership role in the house, Sarah seemed to hold back a bit from the others in the house. Hence, while I know a lot about Angela's story, I know very little about how Sarah came to the house. Like Angela, she was battling an addiction. Also like Angela, she was white. Unlike Angela, she never mentioned children or other family, only friends. Her affect and speech patterns differed from the rest of the US born women in the house leading me to think she was not from one of the poorer parts of the city.

Sarah was nice, though, and was among the most congenial to me when I first started volunteering. Many of the other residents would entirely ignore me, but not Sarah. She would chat with me about various topics. At one point, she'd bleached her hair and then dyed it, but the color came out very different than what she'd been going for, and so we talked about ways to fix it. She offered me a manicure once, but then realized that she had to go to NA so instead just brought me the polish – mint green. Sarah, however, did not totally fit in. One of the helpers once told me, "Sarah won't follow the rules. She has a hard time with the rules, always wants to be out smoking…" At the time I found the statement to be odd because from what I saw of Sarah she was very often cooking in the kitchen with the Indriani, Asmawati and Kusuma, and was quite quick to pick up dishes after a meal.

Sarah did not graduate from HOPE House. Sarah left on her own accord. I don't have vivid notes or memories of when I first met her – but I do for the last time she and I talked.

TV is still on. Something happens on TV, and she says, "Life is tough."

"Yeah" I say.

Then she tells me she's been having cravings. For heroin. That'd be her first choice, then crack. "I don't know why" she says, referring to the fact that she'd choose crack second. She says, "I have a craving and I just won't care about anything. Just one bag, and then I'll worry about what's after that."

She tells me she's on a new med that's making her feel absolutely terrible and it's for the cravings. "It's called TR… something…"she says. She tells me she really wants suboxone but the doctor won't prescribe it to her, she asked him why, but he wouldn't tell her. In my research later, I found that a drug called Tramadol is sometimes prescribed during withdrawl, but is not for treating cravings. Sarah wanted help with her cravings, not withdrawl.

Should I tell her I know of a psychiatrist who will prescribe suboxone? I've no idea – I don't know jack about these meds, nor really about her life. She's quite clearly looking for some answers and doesn't like what she's getting – why not share what I know… But I don't know anything about her situation so I stop myself. Her doc prescribed something else. I do get the sense that she's looking for some "give it up" advice, because she's saying things like, "it makes me feel like shit! Maybe I should just stop. It's not worth it…"

"Should I just stop taking it?" She asks.

I ask, "Is it working?"

She says, "Yeah."

I say, "Will the icky go away?"

"After 2-3 days." she tells me.

I suggest she wait a couple more days then, and see how she feels. She agrees.

We then wonder together why suboxone is not prescribed by her doc. Is it a federal issue? She thinks maybe it is.

Previous to this moment, I had heard her talking with a staff member about how she didn't understand why she couldn't go to a different NA meeting. HOPE House was in a Black and Muslim neighborhood and she wanted to go to a meeting where she knew

some people. But they wouldn't allow her to travel farther to a different NA meeting. I can't say why or what the best route would be for Sarah – but I do know that I heard frustration from her regarding the rules of the house. Other pieces of the puzzle would continue to filter in after Sarah left HOPE House for a different social service agency, but within a day of the conversation she and I had about suboxone, she was gone.

A month later, some other residents told me that Sarah was using again. "Yeah, she's not doing good. Using. And doing worse. Getting in cars. That'll get you killed," said Angela. I felt a high degree of sadness at this news. She'd told me that the addiction was coming on strong – what could I have done different? What could HOPE House have done different? That night of our last conversation, Sister Marilyn had told me that Sarah was on "blackout" and that she wasn't happy about it. She didn't tell me why. A month later I learned that Asmawati had seen her "shoving white stuff up her nose" so I assume that is why she was on blackout. Angela, another resident, said straight out, "She wasn't ready." And at a different time, a helper, Sister Marilyn, had said the same exact words, "She wasn't ready," in referring to why Sarah left the house. But HOPE House was designed to be a safe house for trafficked women. They were prepared to deal with some level of drug abuse, but it was the prostitution which held the helpers' attention more. Sarah expressed to me the type of help she needed. She displayed a level of self awareness that makes me wonder if she indeed "wasn't ready" or if she just needed a different approach. My musings are after the fact; in the long run she went back to using and getting in cars. So HOPE House, in their limited ability to deal with drug addiction

due to a heightened focus on prostitution and victimization, actually silenced Sarah's needs via all the disempowering techniques in the poverty management playbook.

Some months after I learned that Sarah was using again, I asked Sister Rose about Sarah and Sister Rose told me that she'd personally been opposed to suboxone because it was just replacing one addiction with another. She said this so matter-of-factly. Sister Rose's approach is highly antiquated but not surprising. Despite the efficacy of maintenance treatment for individuals addicted to opiates as well as decades of work in neuroscience on the physical manifestations of addiction, a moralizing trend in addiction treatment has remained strong and in fact grown in the last 2 decades since federal funding was opened to faith-based conversion therapies.(Gowan and Atmore 2013). The house, built for victims of victims of CSE, was incapable of assisting Sarah with her addiction. The overall assumption of the house, widely asserted by a variety of founders and helpers, was that the CSE came first and the drugs followed to numb the pain of exploitation. Thus, remove the CSE and the drug would soon follow too. With Sarah, this assumption was damaging and incorrect. However, the house did not revisit its assumptions but rather blamed her for her weakness.

Discussion

Angela was a success of the house – a graduate who became a helper. Angela knew she had an ability to see and understand the problems of her situation and the house, and upon graduating she would begin to use her experience and knowledge to help others. So the House, including or despite its rules, norms and beliefs, was able to help Angela – or rather, Angela was able to make use of the house to help herself. Angela's story shows a delicate balance between personal assertions of agency and a willingness to

fit her needs into the de-agentification parameters of HOPE House. However, Angela takes very little stock in a victim discourse instead relying on a narrative of inner strength and self-knowledge in order to make change in her own life. While she can't remove herself from the hierarchy that was present in the house, she rejects it in various ways and seeks a healing path that fits her needs.

Sarah, on the other hand, tried to assert her needs but was either ignored or disregarded which left her feeling negative feelings towards the house and herself. Sarah, then, actually fit the trope more because she presented as being more dependent on being "helped" rather than helping herself. For example, she said, "I don't understand why they won't let me…" in reference to finding a source for suboxone. Sarah's story shows how the denial of agency in HOPE House at least in part led a resident to consider her needs as "less than" or wrong or confusing. Sarah differs from Angela in this sense because Sarah took on the helplessness pushed by the house, and internally relegated her "knowing" as less than. She tried speaking up for herself, multiple occasions, but no one seemed to listen, so she left. The narrative among helpers and residents alike was that "she wasn't ready" but maybe the house failed her? Maybe the house and its helpers weren't ready?

In the cases of both Angela and Sarah, the reliance on individualism is palpable and the lack of helpers' reflexivity is concerning. The residents helped themselves, or not. They were "ready" or they weren't. Chapter three details some substantial erroneous group-level assumptions of the women who would call HOPE House home, in comparison to the women who eventually did call HOPE House home. But instead of

questioning and revisiting the group level needs of women in the house, perhaps to incorporate strategies of harm reduction, the success or failure of the residents was attributed to the individuals. Most telling of this lack of reflexivity is of the one picture I have of Sarah. It is a picture of her back and she is apparently talking to a smiling Sister Marjory. It was printed in a local magazine's write-up of the HOPE House titled, "Trafficking: The Disturbing Reality of Contemporary Slavery" and was given to the magazine by someone in the house long after Sarah had left. The caption under the photo declares that "Sister Marjory helps the women build a better future." While the founders didn't choose the caption, they did choose the picture.

Chapter Four: The Trouble with Table Thirteen: HTD and the Public Face of the Safe House

Introduction

As chapter three shows, explicit articulations of HTD all but disappeared inside HOPE House despite the presence of internationally trafficked women. HOPE House from the beginning had been set up to accommodate a mixture of women who had experienced commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) or sex trafficking. Yet the rules and culture of the house were more oriented towards the CSE project, indicated by the fact that the word "trafficked" was never uttered to, around or among the residents. The helpers of the house equated CSE with sex trafficking in many ways, but HTD remained an unspoken and rather problematic concept. So, paradoxically, the money and resources that flowed from HTD established the house, but for the founders, the house was never meant to represent HTD.

As I described in chapter three, the house followed a fairly classic model of poverty management: domination of residents was exercised via the enforcement of a specific hierarchy where the house rules and many interactions in the house denied residents agency regarding many small and big aspects of their house. Not all residents accepted the role of victim, though, while others did. In this chapter, I return to the concept of HTD, showing how the trafficking mythos continues to haunt the founders and the staff, even against their will. Through a discussion of HOPE House's development committee and their activities for a two-year span, I show how HTD bumps up against the ideals of the house and is at times outright rejected by helpers in the house. However,

HTD also inspired many women to seek volunteer opportunities at HOPE House and was strategically used by the development committee to obtain gifts, grants and other sources of funding.

HTD, recall, is a specific discourse about human trafficking, one where the victim is feminized and assumed to be women and girls, and one where the act of human trafficking is treated as synonymous with sex trafficking. If not treated as synonymous, it is asserted by many anti-trafficking activists and international organizations that sex trafficking is the most common form of human trafficking. HTD is an incredibly salient concept for the general public, and volunteers were drawn to the drama of the HTD story. The specter of beautiful, young sex slaves had captured global interest and helped keep HOPE House on the radar of potential funders, helpers and various other supportive agencies. In fact, though eschewed inside the house, HTD was what kept the house legitimate in the eyes of the public. The house required approximately $250,000 a year to keep its doors open, bare minimum, so identifying the funds to stay afloat was always a high priority in the house among the helpers. Hence, HTD was utilized at times as an effective way to garner support for the safe house.

This chapter further unpacks the ways HTD flowed through but also was at times blocked from the house by describing the activities of the development committee of HOPE House for more than a two-year span. In those two years, this committee went from being defunct to engaging in an intensive rebranding process and finally to hosting the first "annual" gala for HOPE House in the spring of 2013. Following the development committee led to three related findings. First, while HTD was suppressed *in*

the house, the further the development committee moved into the wealthy homes of the fundraisers, the more it becomes the exclusive public face of the house. This is because the nuns were ambivalent toward and at times completely opposed to being agents of HTD, as I will show below. However, as the development committee moved out of the actual space inspired by a Catholic version of CSE and into the homes of various committee members who take the reins for planning the gala, HTD comes in full force.

Second, many scholars have noted that anti-trafficking activism is often conducted by professional, upper middle class or wealthy women, attempting to further their own professional goals (Agustin 2007c, Bernstein 2010a). My findings support this assertion, and my research reveals how volunteers who identified as professionals were indeed able to use the projects of HOPE House to further their own networks, careers, and social class-based self-esteem: claiming the role of subject through the discourse of HTD. In other words, some of the women on the committee who were either "between" jobs or retired used the discursive field and mythos of HTD to further their own personal and professional personas.

Third, the residents of HOPE House were tucked away from the limelight at the first gala, seated in the middle of the room, and off to the side, for at least two reasons. The status jockeying by some of the volunteers made the real recipients of the funds fall from sight. Additionally, the former residents of HOPE House who attended the gala would have negated the whole discursive argument being presented that night: that beautiful, young and tragic sex slaves needed to be saved. Had they been seated at a front table in honor, with the rest of the VIPs, they would have been an on-going silent

message to potential donors that HOPE House was not what they think. This third conclusion is complicated because it would have been just as problematic to "place" the former residents front and center at the gala, as objects to be gazed upon and fantasized about. Thus, it is not a critique of where the residents were placed but rather that the residents were not part of the planning from the very beginning.

The Development Committee, Spring of 2011 to Spring of 2013: An Autoethnography

Beginnings

The first time I attended a development committee meeting, it was held downtown at the office of Carol Brennan. The committee had not been active of late, but Sister Rose was incredibly concerned with the financial status of the house. This meeting was organized to re-establish development projects and a long supporter of HOPE House, Anne Wendin, had recently re-committed to being part of this committee as Chair. Her task was to create a new brochure for the house, because the old one still used the old logo, which everyone agreed appeared to be too religious. This original logo was designed by a founder who was also a nun, and was an image of a woman before a house, arms outstretched, light shining behind her. The founders of the house felt a great connection to this imagery and it captured their whole belief about the house as a safe, cloistering place. Welcome in, the image seemed to say. As I note in the previous chapter, this image was eventually painted as a mural onto a meeting room wall and also was used on the website, as a picture on the "history" page. But all agreed that to be a professional organization, they needed to remove the feminine and quasi-religious imagery from the promotional materials.

The founders and staff were interested in making HOPE House more embedded in the community. HOPE House had nine beds and the founders dreamed of reaching many more women on a regular basis. Part of the identified needs of the house at this point, besides operating funds to keep the house open, included an in-house psychiatrist, one who understood sexual-based trauma, a renovation of the basement into offices, an intensive outpatient program which they often dreamed could be held in the garage/meeting space out back. This program would include AA, counseling and supply other needs identified by attendees – women who wanted to get off the streets. Last, they wanted more grounds maintenance and to fix the holes in the fence. The fence, it appears (and will appear again) was not keeping the outside out.

As noted earlier, the logo for HOPE House had recently been redesigned to look more "professional" and so early on in my involvement with the committee, we began a greater re-branding process beyond just the redesign of the logo. At first, the idea was just to get a new brochure and letterhead as well as a "donate now" button on the website. However, as the limitations of the free website service became known, it was decided that a new website was to be designed.

The second time we met, a month or so later, we met at Sister Bonnie's home. She lived in a beautiful old house in a prestigious part of town. At this point, Pilar Jones joined us for the first time. While Anne was quite quiet and efficient, Pilar liked to talk. For example, she waxed philosophic on how to help the "international" residents make money. When she'd been in Cambodia a year before, she'd gotten a manicure from a trafficked survivor in a safe house for trafficked women. She said it was wonderful and

she took a long time to just "talk" with the young women though she also admitted that they didn't speak each other's language – and further declared that her husband and son didn't care that she took such a long time because they'd been surrounded by such beautiful women! I didn't witness any signs of discomfort over Pilar's own neo-colonization of the Cambodian women's bodies but her suggestions for turning the house into a spa or other money making enterprise never materialized again. In fact, had the founders been intent upon HTD as part of their mission, utilizing the past suffering of the women in the house to create and sell products would have been a viable option. Instead, just as it was ignored when Pamela, highlighted in vignette one, tried to push entrepreneurism, it was ignored here too.

Pilar also liked to drop names and talk about other prestigious volunteering she'd done. For example, many of her examples came from her work with "Alex's Lemonade Stand" and she was quick to point out the strong corporate giving that she'd helped establish. She also announced, at the beginning of a meeting about six months into her involvement, that her husband had been made the executive director of a very large philanthropic organization in the city. She said, "I can't promise anything, but I can put in a good word…" with a sly smile. Anne, on the other hand, was heir to a large local company though I only learned this later from Sister Rose; it is not something she presented herself. She did not name drop and, though she was the chair of the committee, she was constantly overshadowed by Pilar.

Pilar was not on the committee to build a career in non-profit work or anti-trafficking activism. She was an established chiropractor and enjoyed taking long trips to

impoverished countries. Pilar, to me, represented one way that individuals enhanced their own subjectivity through the discourse. Pilar enjoyed being a helper and portrayed this often with her stories. Actually, Pilar wasn't even that invested in HTD, as a discourse, but rather she seemed to dwell on being a person who raised money for various charities.

Rebranding

Within a few months of my time on the development committee, the work of the committee became an intense struggle for identifying their brand and, indeed, re-branding was clearly necessary. A quick Google search of HOPE House led the searcher to a series of pornography sites, hosted by a sex worker named "Hope." Starting small, the first iteration of the "re-branding" process was via a new brochure created by Anne, not a founder or paid helper of the house, and not a Catholic nun, that included 4 stock photos of women, all looking sad and troubled. Two of the images were clearly white women, and a third was in silhouette so no race was clearly identifiable, though the light tone of the hands in the photo and the hair would lead one to assume it was a picture of a white woman as well. One picture of the four women had olive skin and dark hair. Three of the four photos were of young women, sad and staring off into space, but the front photo, which was a picture of a middle-aged white woman, maybe 45 or so. She, too, was sad and staring off into space. This first branding attempt by a volunteer didn't sit well with the staff. They wanted to present HOPE House as "as nice place; soft, beautiful, inviting." (Field Notes, 12/6/2011)

For reasons unknown to me, Anne resigned from the committee soon after the brochure project was done and I didn't see her again. Pilar, who had connected the

committee with her sister in Arizona and had taken over facilitation of the website redesign, resigned a few months after Anne to go on a trip to Rwanda. I was to take over the website redesign, and began working with Pilar's sister Parker on the project, for which Parker would be paid three thousand dollars. However, once Pilar was no longer on the committee, we all decided that her sister was charging too much and the website project was put on hold for a while. This angered both Pilar and her sister Parker, and they let us know that they were not pleased via strongly worded emails. For a long time, I tried to make sense of Pilar's presence on the committee. While her speech still confuses me, in addition to the ways in which she created her notion of self through the act of charity work, she also used the space of HOPE House to try and help her sister. This was my first inclination that, in this space, I was working with women who were more invested in their own networks and contacts than helping a struggling social service keep its doors open.

I understand the turnover of the development committee; it was not a fun committee on which to sit. Most ideas were energetically challenged and downplayed by the founding nuns and they spent a great deal of time finding ways to talk about the negative setbacks the house was experiencing and reject most suggestions of change. For example, twice request for proposals for federal grants for anti-trafficking services came to our attention, which would have meant sustaining funds for the house for years to come, and twice the founding nuns decided that we weren't ready. The primary reason for why federal grants would not be sought was that HOPE House was in its infancy and still needed to create stronger infrastructure. In fact, it was just one founder, the leader

Sister Marjory, who made this claim, and the rest of the committee would then concur. Using the house's infancy as a reason not to seek federal grants might have been partially true, however the founders' ambivalence towards obtaining a federal grant also indicated that they were aware that HTD was a powerful force, they themselves had used it and would use it again, and that it was not a good fit for their mission. The way HTD was flowing in the general public, especially with its focus on young girls, would not allow them to help the women they intended to help. Partnering with the federal government on the issue of human trafficking could have easily overshadowed the real reason they were there – to work on CSE. More than once, a founder lamented in a meeting that the federal government was more interested in trafficked girls than trafficked women. "No one wants to help women," Sister Bonnie said when we were discussing the likelihood of obtaining a federal grant and the recent federal focus on the trafficking of girls in particular.

Professionalization of the Committee

Sister Rose received quite a few cold calls from people who wanted to volunteer – so many that she expressed being overwhelmed by all the requests. To deal with this, she began concertedly vetting those calls, and meeting with potential development committee members away from the house in an attempt to build a stronger, lasting group of knowledgeable women. In addition to Sister Rose, Sister Marjory, Sister Bonnie and me, three new members of the development committee joined in the months following Anne and Pilar's resignations. Melissa Lohrman was a young professional, in her early thirties. She appeared to have many contacts in the fields of technology and entertainment. She

always has manicured nails and would kiss Sister Rose, once on each cheek, when they greeted before the meetings. Joyce Bueller was a professional woman with a reserved but classy affect, though said she was not working at the moment. In the past she'd worked on other philanthropic projects for unmentioned organizations and businesses and she clearly knew about funding a non-profit. About 55 years old, Joyce had a calm and open demeanor. Eventually, Joyce would also be invited to join the Board of Directors of HOPE House. Last, Marianne Midlow, a retired professor of divinity from a prestigious college in the area rounded out our new development committee. Marianne was recently retired and wanted to dedicate herself to social issues in her increased spare time. Marianne took on the task of communicating HOPE House's needs and mission to various faith-based organizations in the area.

This solid base of knowledgeable and engaged volunteers would see HOPE House through an entire re-branding process as well as planning and executing the first gala. The rebranding process included a push to unite the web domain, email address and name of the house. As noted, when HOPE House was created, the domain of hopehouse.com was already owned by a business featuring a sex worker named Hope. So while the name of the house was HOPE House, the domain and email were different – "ahomeforhope.com." Both Melissa and Joyce stressed the importance of having a match between these various incantations of the house name. The only way to do this would be to officially change the name of HOPE House to "A House for Hope." Sisters Rose and Marjory vehemently opposed this change, even though the "unofficial" name could and would stay "HOPE House." They'd changed the logo, as I mentioned in chapter three,

but changing the name was off the table. In this way, the Sisters established a line in the sand – though it might make professional sense to change the name, this house had deeper and different meaning for the founding helpers. Their opposition to a full rebranding was another indication that the founders were ambivalent toward altering their project to fit goals which fell outside the cloistering – be they federal or professional.

At this point Joyce took over the task of writing an appeal letter to send to every entity and person that had ever given any money to HOPE House in the past, as well as to identify additional new groups and people (with deep pockets) to also receive the appeal for money. Melissa took over the tech piece of rebranding. She had friends in the web design business that would design, host and maintain the website for a discounted fee. Again, I was struck by the use of friends to spend HOPE House funds but the rest of the group, me included, were convinced by Melissa's urging to have professional web developers design and manage the site rather than rely on rinky-dink free options and volunteers who would come and go. Marianne started her own side project, connecting with various churches to make presentations on the issue of human trafficking in an attempt to create awareness and hopefully donations would also follow.

HTD was in the promotional material much like it was in the house – acting as a guise in references to "sex trafficking" rather than driving the work we were doing. For example, in a letter sent to potential grantors written in 2012, HOPE House is called "a non-profit organization that provides services and a safe haven for international and domestic women who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation (sex trafficking)" (My notes, 4/12/2012). Sex trafficking was the after-thought. At the time the appeal

letter was written, Kusuma, Indriani and Asmawati had been in the home for over a year, but their status as anomalies in the house remained: they were not victims of CSE nor of sex trafficking. HTD had been instrumental in creating the house, via the originating conference, the initial funding, and the connections to ICE to provide half the residents. However, in the case of Kusuma, Indriani and Asmawati, a more nuanced version of human trafficking allowed ICE to match their trafficked experience to a house for "trafficked women." However, once in the house, in a space of CSE, they didn't fit at all. The letter's representation of the residents of the house highlights this continual misfit of discourse to reality. Though the discourse was CSE rather than HTD, the misfit remained.

At the end of six months, the development committee had accomplished a great deal. Over forty thousand dollars in funds poured in through the appeal letter project and a new, beautiful website with a prominent "donate now" button attracted even more internet traffic to know about HOPE House and to donate small amounts of five or ten dollars once or twice a day.

So where was HTD in the rebranding? HTD materialized as the term "sex trafficking" and was used in tandem with the term "commercial sexual exploitation" in the new brochure. However, in this new brochure, the images of the house and stock photos of women portrayed the home as a clean and beautiful safe haven where women were free to express joy. This new brochure more closely matched the tropes of CSE and the desired mission of HOPE House than HTD (for example, see the image of "tropes" in chapter one). Up to this point in my time with the development committee, HTD

continued to be downplayed in comparison with CSE. The house was for victims of CSE, "or sex trafficking." (The anomaly of the "international" residents trafficked for domestic servitude was always left untouched.) It is interesting to note, too, that all of our meetings, after the first one at Carol's office and the second one at Sister Bonnie's house, were held within the walls of HOPE House – sometimes in the dining room, where residents once made us food, sometimes in a basement office space, sometimes in the back meeting space of the garage, which reeked of mold. But even if our meetings were out of earshot of the residents, we always passed through their rooms to get to our respective meeting space. I hypothesize that in addition to the nuns' ambivalence to HTD, this physical connection to the space kept the falsity of HTD from infecting the development committee's use of the discourse too much. Certain falsities of CSE were palpable to me only; the other committee members were able to better reconcile CSE with house experiences.

Once the new development committee was established, the idea of a gala began to take shape. For about six months, the nuns struggled with the idea of a gala, especially, it appeared, Sister Rose, but eventually it was decided that a gala could do double duty – garner HOPE House some much needed funds and raise awareness about the issue of human trafficking; if anything, it could be a "friend-raiser." At this moment though, the moment the gala takes hold in the committee's imaginations, HTD begins a slow and steadily creep into the auspices of HOPE House. Interestingly, also at this moment, the development committee meetings begin a slow and steady creep out of HOPE house.

The Peeping John?

In early summer of 2012 in the early evening, at one of the last development committee meetings that was held inside HOPE House, we were to meet in the basement. Sister Rose had obtained a grant about nine months prior to develop the basement into a series of offices. It was a cozy space that allowed us to get out of the main living areas of the residents. The main meeting room in the basement had a large table and even a tea and coffee cart, always stocked with a tin of cookies or two.

HOPE House was located on a one-way street and I had to circle the block in my car in order to park in front of the house. Usually a graffiti covered white truck sat on the side of HOPE House – this truck had been parked there for two years. The side yard of HOPE House was blocked from the street with a chain link fence and a thick wall of shrubs. The "smoking stoop" at the back of the house was about 10 feet from the shrubs. This is where the residents, especially the US-born residents, spent their outdoor, leisure time when at home. This particular day, the white truck was there as usual and, behind it, an old, silver Dodge Neon was parked. As I approached the sedan, I saw a white, thin man in a red and grey nylon running suit, his face pressed up against the fence, peeking in to the back yard. The ethnographer in me completely disappeared in that moment and I got scared. I tried to stare him down, but he turned to smile at me, disarming me. I looked away.

I turned the corner, parked the car, determined to get his license plate and just be a present person, let him know he'd been seen. I didn't know who he was and to this point, I had not been totally conscious in my own analyses of the problematics in the idea of cloistering – where men were "the enemy" and to be kept outside. A product of my

culture, my race, my class, my sex, my age, I saw an enemy peeking through those bushes. I saw a pimp. I saw a trafficker. And he scared me. So I went for a walk, back around the corner, intent upon walking right past him, but his face brightened up as I neared, he was going to address me, and viscerally, I had to cross the street. The imaginary trafficker, the one I'd mocked and problematized, stole my senses. I noticed half way down the block, on a porch of a yellow house, stood another man, just watching the street, which was empty other than Mr. Track Suit and me. I realized that it would take a long time to go around the block and I wanted to inform the nuns of this man's presence so I doubled back as nonchalantly as possible, got his license plate number, and entered the house.

I found Sister Marilyn in the offices, told her what was going on, gave her the license plate number, and then went to the basement for the meeting. I was rattled. I was not expecting men to literally peek in the bushes! Sister Marilyn, tough nun but seemingly completely unaffected by this revelation, went out and confronted the man: asked him what he was doing there. He left.

In the basement I told the others what I'd seen. They were curious, but not surprised. This wasn't the first time; Sister Rose wanted to get cameras installed. The meeting started, but my adrenaline, my shame at my weakness as an ethnographer (why couldn't I approach him! I could have learned so much!), and the coming face to face with my own biases regarding men and the house were all swirling in my thoughts. But, business as usual commenced. We had a Gala to plan. I write in my notes,

Sister Rose said the new woman was just pimped out from here last week. I am surprised because everyone is so nonchalant about it! I'd be calling the cops, I think. Not the nuns, but they are here every day and my impression is, as a researcher, I don't always get the full story. So I decide, when in Rome, and I try to push it out of my mind (Field Notes, 4/24/12).[40]

In support of my findings in chapter three, this example of the peeping John further shows that HTD is not in the house. I had wholly expected to find the house, or at least the development committee, teeming with mentions of the sex slavery of women and girls, but what I found was that the sensationalism of HTD (indeed, what I think I was reacting to when I saw the man peering through the bushes) was a strategic tool, not a belief system of the helpers in the house. They knew that the women's experiences were complicated, and unlike Nicholas Kristof, they had no intention of saving them. The founders' calm, cool approach to the peeping Johns indicates that the women of the house were not perceived via a lens of HTD: as young and "always already a victim" (Hua et al 2010). The moment of the peeping John then, was not a moment to batten down the hatches or circle the wagons against scary predators. The peeping John was par for the course, an element of CSE that was not welcomed but was also seemingly expected. The lack of a loving or protective response that evening indicated more than an absence of HTD, however. It also indicated that the helpers of the house were not intent upon creating only a caring space but rather, were dedicated to providing a service; they

[40] Three more women left the house in the coming weeks, presumably pimped out as well. Nothing like this had happened in my first year there. Early in my time working at HOPE House, I had interviewed Officer Kelly – a straight-talking policewoman who was peripherally connected to HOPE House. She had, at that time, predicted that as the address became known, via residents who left to go back onto the street, the house would become fertile picking ground for finding "girls."

were building an institution and there would be casualties, like the woman who'd just been "pimped out last week."

The Gala

Where I did find HTD in this ethnography of the safe house was when the helpers of the safe house wanted to find funds to keep the house running in conjunction with the meetings literally leaving the physical space of the house behind. The nuns knew that the house had virtually nothing to do with HTD, but they also knew that if they were going to keep the house alive, they would have to play into the discourse of the general public and obscure the realities of the house if need be. Thus, the gala planning was soaked in HTD in a variety of ways, and the primary carriers of the discourse were not the nuns but the other professional women on the committee. HTD was blatantly used as a strategy for obtaining financial backing and the volunteers were at times used by the nuns as a way to link into the hot button issue of human trafficking. CSE, at this point, became either absent or a byline to the greater message of HTD. Sister Marjory noted that the "words 'Human Trafficking'" needed to be present in the promotional material because "there was already a media-driven knowledge of this." During this same conversation, she also said, we need to "draw on the emotive response of the public to human trafficking" (My notes, September 20, 2012). Sister Marjory is not referring to human trafficking, however, she is referring to HTD – the way human trafficking is narrowly conflated to young, beautiful women and sex in the publics' minds. However, HTD was not Sister Marjory's concern – she was committed to pushing the idea that all prostituted women were victims. Sister Rose, on the other hand, was highly critical of the Gala though Melissa told me eventually that the Gala had actually been Sister Rose's idea.

By autumn, just a few months after the peeping John incident, the development committee meetings had moved out of the house and into members' homes: Joyce, Melissa and Sister Bonnie offered up their dining rooms. I'd been gone for the month of August so I was not privy to the originally stated reasons why the committee decided to move outside of HOPE House, but when I asked, I was told that it was due to a desire to protect the privacy of residents. Personally, I suspected that the movement into wealthier neighborhoods could also have been about wealthy white women not wanting to travel to a poor Black neighborhood in light of the fact that both Sister Rose and Asmawati had been assaulted that summer and early fall on the street near the home.[41] Regardless of why we moved out of HOPE House and into the homes of wealthy women, this distance from the complex lives of residents facilitated a complete shift in discourse from CSE to HTD as the gala planning began in earnest. In these million dollar homes, we were no longer talking about the house, we were talking about a party to earn money for trafficked women.

HTD also became the ruling strategy of the committee by limiting their search for gala keynote speakers from a pool of HTD inspired activists like Nicholas Kristof, Rachel Lloyd, and Somaly Mam. Additionally, it was decided that we would honor a state congressman who had sponsored a state anti-trafficking bill, which, when it eventually passed, required establishments like exotic dance clubs and truck stops to post a National Anti-Trafficking Hotline poster where potential victims could see it and seek help.

[41] My notes are unclear as to when Sister Rose's assault took place – if it occurred in late summer or early fall, once the committee had moved out of the HOPE House.

In discussions of "honoring" individuals on the evening of the gala, it was also suggested that the committee honor Sister Marjory with a lifetime achievement award for her tireless work with victims of trafficking. Sister Marjory was a founder of the house, as well as president of the board of directors and often the leader of the group. As a critical ethnographer, I was aware that there was no discussion of including or honoring residents who had graduated from the program. In fact, the residents, in this external set of meetings, quickly disappeared – just as HTD had disappeared in the house.

Eventually called "The Evening for Liberty: A Blue Ribbon Gala for Anti-Human Trafficking Benefiting HOPE House," the CSE element of HOPE House's mission was relegated to one small sentence on the save the date card. The rest of the event was set up to be about human trafficking, the HTD version. The keynote speaker was a huge name in anti-trafficking and abolitionist activism. In fact, getting her to speak at the event was an exciting coup, which we celebrated during a meeting. Our little house was going to get a speaker who was an internationally renowned speaker on human trafficking!

As the Gala approached, the tensions began to rise as the volunteers engaged in a battle over status. The way we volunteers used this committee to pad our resume and our networks was obvious, me included. For example, upon the decision to obtain a "donor" database for the organization, both Melissa and I asked to be part of the training sessions. We would not be in charge of the database, but we wanted to add a line to our linked-in bio that we knew "E-Tapestry." I took over the chair position of the Silent Auction, at four months pregnant and with a full time job, with the idea that the organizational skills would look good on a resume. Melissa asked the committee if it would be ok if, in

addition to calling herself "Gala Chair," she also give herself the title of "financial consultant."

Melissa and Joyce also started to engage in their own one-upping of each other via the contacts and money they could bring into the space. Both found wealthy friends with nice homes to host "pre-parties" to raise awareness about Human Trafficking and the upcoming gala. They both found and donated expensive items to be auctioned at the silent auction – a personal flight around the Statue of Liberty and a week's stay at a vacation home in North Carolina.

But the real tension between Melissa and Joyce came when Joyce seemingly convinced the group to not spend money on "marketing" the gala via radio and other press engagements. That night, all I saw was the tension in the room over this issue. Later, Melissa confessed to me that she suspected that Joyce didn't want her forty grand fundraising success to be overshadowed by a successful gala. If marketed correctly, Melissa claimed, the gala could bring in over one hundred grand.

Also, every step of the way, two of the three nuns found a multitude of reasons why this gala was a bad idea and why it was a waste of our time. We always plowed ahead, but each meeting required listening to the same set of concerns from Sister Marjory and Sister Rose, and attempting to put their minds at ease. Still, they remained unconvinced. For example, Sister Marjory was adamant that we not require the board of directors donate any money or even ask them to buy a ticket to the gala. Joyce always asserted that we ask, but not demand, but even asking the board for money was too offensive for Sister Marjory. This discussion, or variants of this discussion, happened at

almost every meeting. I write in my field notes at one point, that we'd been discussing this issue for six months. Sister Marjory was very protective of the Board though it seemed that the Board actually did very little to help HOPE House. One board member, a local professor, hadn't attended the board meetings for over a year. My hunch was that Sister Marjory *was* the board, for all intents and purposes and she liked it that way.

The negativity of the nuns also bled into the perception of the work we were doing. For example, Sister Rose gave me a list of travel agencies to contact for silent auction donations. I was to send them a save the date card and an appeal for an item to be donated to the silent auction. Of the list of fifty travel agencies, about a third of the queries were "returned to sender." Sister Rose was very clear that she thought this was a waste of our resources and her consternation was directed at me, not at the faulty list.

The committee grew to one more just a month before the gala. Amy Knight was a young, African American lawyer who worked in the area of immigration. She had done gala planning before and entered the committee full steam. In casual talk as we neared the gala, she told me that Sister Rose had "chastised" her for not "being on the ball."

The negativity of the nuns was due to a few reasons. First, they were all seasoned social service workers and were realists regarding the processes of development. It was hard work and they were in it for the long haul, but the volunteers on the committee would come and go with their exuberance and dreams of impacting a social issue. Like Agustin (2007a) points out that the issue of human trafficking and abolitionist work is a space for some women to grow professionally, the nuns also encountered and had to deal with this element of volunteer engagement. Second, the nuns were also highly protective

of the space they had created. They knew that HOPE House had nothing to do with HTD, and the more control they had over the insides of the house, the better able they were to control the trajectory of house that they knew had nothing to do with HTD.

Just a few weeks before the gala, Melissa and Amy, the two younger members of the committee in their late twenties or early thirties, stayed after the meeting, which had been held at the venue where we were to host the gala (the private school Melissa attended as a girl), to discuss the silent auction and review the space set aside for it. As Amy was new to the committee and it was my first time meeting her, I sought her consent to be observed in my research study and this sparked a discussion of my research and some research that she had previously done in law school on the issue of human trafficking. What was supposed to be a 10 minute strategy session on the silent auction turned into an hour and a half conversation about other members of the committee and the gala process overall. As I'd always attempted to stay out of the drama, and observe with a keen and critical eye, I found that my connection to the other committee members was weak. This moment that Melissa and Amy brought me into their perceptions was new to me.

I had noticed that the mood in the room was incredibly tense that night. Melissa was outright rude to one of the older volunteers and was not very effective, seemingly flustered, at describing the types of paper the gala program could be printed on and the costs we would incur depending on the type of paper we chose – the whole room expressed confusion and could not come to a consensus. When Amy and Melissa sat down with me in the cozy chairs near a fireplace in the entry way of the venue, Melissa

immediately shared with me her frustration with Joyce and claimed she'd "shut down" the marketing of the event out of jealousy. Further, Melissa expressed that she had been trafficked, though she didn't know this was the case until she started volunteering for HOPE House, and further that Joyce had disrespectfully referred to Melissa's past; this disregard had opened the emotional wound for Melissa. She also expressed that she was angry at me for supporting our choice of speaker that we'd found for the radio program to be held on the day of the event. I had suggested the new speaker had more time between her experience with CSE than the woman we originally had hoped would speak (Angela from HOPE House) and that that time lapse was probably why she felt more comfortable speaking on the radio. This had impacted Melissa in that her emotional wound was still strong for her and she felt I'd minimized the long-term impacts of being in commercial sex. In general, I had found Melissa to be difficult to reach, from a friend perspective, early on in her involvement with HOPE House and the development committee. But as I listened to her discuss Joyce as a negative force, and as I went back through my notes in the coming weeks to identify other moments of Melissa's maltreatment of other committee members, it became clearer to me that this was, at times, a competition for Melissa.

I was initially surprised that evening to learn of the depth of the drama that had infused the gala for Melissa but two elements of my research helped me make sense of Melissa's brand of engagement with the house. First, through the work of Agustin (2007a), I felt like I was first hand witnessing what she identified as the professional women with an agenda. Second, this work allowed Melissa the chance to be important;

in this way, Melissa's competitiveness, her emotional attachment to the gala and her anger with other members of the committee made sense. For while we had all invested time and other resources into the planning of the event, she had invested a great deal of her own subjectivity into the potential success of the gala, to the point of claiming the label of "trafficked" herself.

Volunteers' involvement in the development committee was predicated on more than just empathy, though that's why they all said they were there. Laura Agustin asks, "Are [helpers] so caught up in their projects that they do not stop to measure the effects on the people they want to help?" (2007a:7) Agustin posits that the answer to this question is yes. One of these "projects" is a neocolonialist control of poor people (Mohanty 1988), but another of these projects is establishing and maintaining a career (Agustin 2007b). Most notably, Melissa's jockeying for status with other members of the committee as well as via the titles Melissa collected to put on her resume indicated that that she was there for the resume building. Lest I appear too critical of Melissa, I, too, often sought ways to make my volunteering pay off in a way other than to gather dissertation data; that too was using the discursive field to further my own career goals.

The night of the gala was rainy. This detail frustrated me because a few of the more negative women on the committee had continually expressed concern that it would rain on the night of the gala and that people would get wet and I had actively pushed the suggestion that we could not impact the weather so we should just ignore it. Their prophecy came true. A string quartet played near the bar and the silent auction room was filled with items and guests bidding on trips to the outer banks of North Carolina, original

artwork, restaurant gift cards, and beautiful quilts made by a Quaker organization. Dinner was late, but the band played in the dining room.

Eventually, we began the award portion of the night, honoring the senator, who couldn't stay, and our own Sister Marjory. Various speakers implored the room of 230 guests to give and give deeply. The internationally known keynote speaker had expressed to Amy, our designated airport liaison who had picked the speaker up, a lack of clarity as to why she was speaking at our event so Amy told her to talk about her own work and ask the audience to give to HOPE House. The speaker did just that. Utilizing HTD in conjunction with CSE, she recalled her own international commercial sex experiences as a girl and then young woman and asked over and over for the audience to double or triple their donation. Her message was that, to engage in anti-trafficking work, the victims/survivors needed practical resources like a home and food, the helpers needed to be honored and paid for their work, and mostly, all of the work needed to be done in the name of love. Often, she mentioned God, and the church that saved her and she critiqued larger, better funded establishments (with fancy computer labs, new furniture and horses and pools) as appearing less loving. Her point was that HOPE House clearly came from a place of love and commitment and so our money was best spent there. Though the evening's Master of Ceremonies had opened the nights speeches with brief mention of human trafficking as an issue of labor and commercial sex, just as I so often witnessed, the rest of the event spoke only about sexual services.

The first couple of tables were reserved for the VIPs of the audience: the senator we were honoring and his entourage, the keynote speaker, the executive director of the

house, and various regional anti-trafficking activists. Melissa and Joyce's tables—they had both drummed up enough support to have multiple tables—were toward the front as well. Farther back, though, and to the side was table 13, the table where residents Angela and Stephanie were seated with a number of nuns who continually volunteered at the safe house but who were not on the development committee. The seating had been determined on a large excel spreadsheet by a volunteer, Merri, who was treated particularly rudely by Melissa. For instance, once Melissa asked Merri to stop chewing with her mouth open because Melissa was allergic to the nut mix she was eating and Melissa said the fumes from Merri's breath were making her throat close up. Allergies are indeed something that needs to be communicated in group settings, but Melissa's approach was off-putting. Merri spent weeks on the seating arrangements but Melissa oversaw where all the VIPs would be seated.

The residents of the house that attended the first gala, Angela and Stephanie, were tucked away, either purposely or unconsciously. Regardless, the real residents of HOPE House, the women who had navigated a massive life change due in part to the program at HOPE House were not thought to be included in the planning process, honored publically or given space at the VIP tables. Due to HTD as the reigning discourse of the night, the spotlight couldn't be on them for very long though – not in this public space where HOPE House needed to get money from wealthy donors. Wealthy donors wanted beautiful and young tragic sex slaves and it was only through the speeches that we could give them that. Angela and Stephanie were over forty and from poor parts of the city – their mannerisms, comportment and speech patterns portrayed who they "really" were –

not tragic sex slaves but poor women recovering from addictions and trying to establish a different life. The assumption was that the general public was less convinced that US-born sex workers fighting addiction were as worthy of the support than the tropes of HTD. As one member noted in our final wrap-up meeting, "[Girls] always get more money than women" (Field notes, March 30, 2013). Intentional or not, Angela and Stephanie were assigned to Table 13, instead of Table 1. The mismatch between the real "victims" and the imagined ones was left untouched; the reduction of visibility of Angela and Stephanie was never mentioned by the committee.

A week later, while the gala was still fresh in our minds, we met to discuss the successes and challenges of the gala process and evening. Melissa was conspicuously absent and Amy called in rather than appear in person. We met back at HOPE House for the first time in about nine months, in the garage-turned-meeting room. The entire committee appeared burnt out and it was decided that a separate committee for the gala would be needed if it was done again, because all of our other development work had been put on hold. The gala brought in about $23,000 dollars after costs. The committee members seemed dissatisfied with that number, and thought that our lack of corporate sponsorship is where our real earning potential should have originated. Sister Marjory thought our keynote speaker was "over the top" in asking the audience to give us money. During this final meeting, Amy, who was on speaker phone, kept interrupting and speaking long diatribes about her perceptions of the gala. Those of us who were physically present started trying to speak under her so we could move the meeting along. There was a lot of eye catching, but no disrespectful comments made toward Amy, other

than to call her "a lawyer" after she had hung up as a way to explain her rather successful attempts to dominate most aspects of the discussion that afternoon. The main conclusion that the committee came to was that it was a good first attempt, but that since we were all so burnt out, we should maybe do this every other year. Amy, of course, had disagreed.

Conclusion: The Trouble with Table 13?

The seating of Angela and Stephanie, at table 13 rather than front and center symbolized the misfit of HTD in the house as well as the founding helpers ambivalent relationship with it. Angela and Stephanie didn't fit the trope. They were US-born, middle aged women local to the city. There was no hiding that they were women with storied pasts, not innocent girls, and in the end, the public did not buy into the idea that women were "always already a victim" either, and the founders knew that. For the founders, the residents were not anything like the tropes of HTD and this was not concerning because there were not interested in HTD. The foot dragging with the federal grants, the lack of protection presented when the man was peeking in through the bushes, the voiced desire to have images in the brochure of happy, rehabilitated women, all of these inclinations by the founders showed that HTD was a necessary evil for them rather than a driving force.

Chapter Five: A Woman's Place is in the Home: Unintended Consequences of HTD and Anti-trafficking Activism

> *Frankly, being disappeared is worse than being stigmatised in many ways, particularly where one's experiences should be central to the theories and phenomena described. Both denunciation and silencing are techniques of control by those interested in maintaining hegemonic discourses. (Laura Agustin 2003: 98)*

The aim of this dissertation has been a better understanding of how and why human trafficking is understood and acted upon in society. Through ethnography, I was able to observe communication surrounding the issue of human trafficking and, in addition, compare that speech to the actions of "helping" at one particular site, a safe house organized for trafficked women. By following the arc of this dissertation, from chapter one to chapter four, I will re-establish claims, questions and hypotheses made along the way in order to fit the puzzle pieces of each chapter together. I do this with three lessons in mind: a final conclusion that was not expected when I embarked on this research, a suggestion for feminist activists seeking to address the issue of human trafficking, and a theoretical implication regarding the study of discourse in general.

Chapter one establishes the parameters of a discourse on human trafficking. Human Trafficking Discourse, or HTD. Briefly put, I assert that HTD limits the users' attention to human trafficking in a variety of ways. Agents of the discourse feminize the notion of victim to include only women and children. Further, these feminized victims are victims of those who use their bodies for sex. The implications of HTD as the

dominant discourse on the issue of human trafficking are many. First, the agency removed from women and children misrepresents agentic aspects of migration and individual poverty management practices which include women and children. Second, within the discourse, by gendering the concept of agency, much like feminizing victims, the potential and real trafficking and as well as vulnerabilities of men, boys, transgender and queer individuals are, at best, mentioned as an aside, and at worst, wholly ignored. All of this narrowing happens because a very specific episteme undergirds HTD: women are vulnerable and should be kept in homes, i.e. private spaces. While some users of HTD would not agree with the episteme that a woman's place is in the home, it does not erase the powerful message that HTD sends to the general public and which the general public consumes on a regular basis.

Chapter two identifies the mythos of HTD, not in scholarly literature, but in a real moment where global experts on the issue of human trafficking and anti-trafficking activists gathered to discuss human trafficking. I illustrate how the feminizing of the issue occurs both as strategy and as a non-reflexive reliance on a gender episteme where women as a group require home-like protection. The speeches detailed in chapter two draw on the episteme of "women are best kept home," in that the women-victims of their speeches need to be rescued and then to be provided opportunities. No attention is paid to women as agents, seeking their own opportunity. I note at the end of the chapter that some would consider this pigeon-holing of women into victim status its own form of violence because in this way the state easily erases the subjectivity of women/woman. I sought to clarify the notion of violence via "symbolic violence" and then set out, in

chapter three, to see if symbolic violence could be identified due to HTD, in a safe house for trafficked women.

I find in chapter three that HTD does not result in symbolic violence in the safe house – not because it is not a violence-inducing discourse – but because HTD disappears in the safe house for trafficked women. The US-born women do not fit HTD at all, and while Asmawati, Indriani and Kusuma had been identified as trafficked by US authorities and brought to the house to live, these women do not fit the reigning discourse in the house because they were not "sex" trafficked. The discourse used by helpers of the house centers on the concept of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and include a Catholic-inspired cloistering of residents away from the evils of society, especially men. In addition, the house mimics a fairly classic mode of poverty management. This is consistent with HTD, but it is not HTD. Residents of the house are accorded less agency via house rules as well as in interactions between residents and helpers. Further, with Sarah's story, I find that the cloistering of the residents is not necessarily the type of protection they need. Cloistering ignores some very real threats of the outside world, such as addiction and potentially exploitative or abusive men, which clearly plague some of the residents. The house is ill-equipped to deal with issues of addiction, and the cloistering keeps men away, but the residents themselves do not keep men away.

While HTD disappears within the house, this house was created in part on the heels of HTD. HTD was a core strategy to obtain funds for the house on an ongoing basis. Chapter four demonstrates how the primary leaders of the house helpers were often ambivalent to HTD. This suggests that they were decidedly divorced from the

discourse. Their discourse fit with the epistemes of HTD though, via a desire to keep women safe, in private spaces. Therefore HTD was not wholly abandoned but rather easily morphed into CSE. Further, these leaders knew that the general public was more apt to give money to a trafficked girl-woman than to a middle-aged woman in Narcotics Anonymous, aging out of prostitution. It was during preparations for a gala that HTD really enters the realm of the safe house again, though only discursively and only outside the actual walls of the house.

Lessons

"Women and Children"

As I finished writing chapter four, one final detail began to trouble me. While I set out to claim that HTD was about women, because often that is a very general term used in the discourse, the way it was used in the gala leads me to assert that HTD is not about women as victims, at least in that setting. HTD is about young women and adolescent girls as victims. This means that the phrase "women and children" in the Palermo Protocol takes on a heightened meaning as well. Women and children are legally divorced as concepts within in the Protocol in that children can never consent to begin exploitative situations; women can. However, when it comes to HTD, women and children must remain a cohesive category – a reminder that women are childlike, and if they are not, then they are not worthy of help. In the future, I would like to further explore the continued use and salience of this unification.

The women-residents in this narrative are not childlike but the cloistering of HOPE House reinforces this unification of women and children via the tactic of

maintaining a specific hierarchy explored in chapter three. The residents were often treated as adolescents rather than as grown, agentic women. As the anomalies, Asmawati, Indriani and Kusuma, show[42], US law is no longer as attached to HTD as it was ten years ago. ICE brought trafficked, but not "sex trafficked" women to this house for trafficked women. In this way it is possible that government entities have opened their categories of trafficked and thus need spaces to temporarily help the women, men and children they find. Thus, an abolitionist cloister was not a good fit. By ignoring many of the poverty management rules, such as unlocking the door so they could come and go, and seeking a new life without the permission or guidance of house helpers, the "international" women indicated a misfit between their needs and the assumptions of the house. But the "international" women also were witnesses to assertions of domination upon their claims of agency, as was exemplified by Sister Rose's rejection of their birthday gift to her.

A Feminist Response

Due to this lack of fit between CSE and a "new" HTD, one that would reconfigure the scope of victims and of trafficking (which is not wholly out of reach), strategies based on harm reduction and reflexive listening strategies should be employed. As Laura Agustin writes (2007),

> Do I believe that those concerned with social justice and helping should sit on their hands and do nothing? Frequently asked this question, I always reply No: the desires of helpers, activists and theorists, whether utopian or pragmatic, are as valid as any other. I advocate neither nihilism nor indifference; on the contrary, I think constructive change is possible. The questions I pose to those desiring to help are: When embarking on a social project that concerns other people, how do

[42] Via their identification and placement in HOPE HOUSE.

> you decide what your actions will be? Do you choose what is most rewarding to you personally? Do you try to find out what the objects of your help actually want? How do you accomplish that? What do you do if you find out that you cannot realistically provide what they desire? Or if you do not like it? In other words, who defines social projects? (2007:193).

There is a lot of surface-level valorization of "giving voice" to the victim in UN circles, US circles, and even among anti-trafficking groups; however, Agustin adequately captures what the "helpers" role in making space for that voice would look like. I assert that had the helpers of HOPE House approached their helping this way, Sarah would possibly not have disappeared. The violence of erasing and delegitimizing whole lives must stop. In a sense, this speaking for the residents of the house mirrors the process Chandra Mohanty identified in her critique of Western feminism (1988). She claims that, "western feminist writing on women in the third world must be considered in the context of the global hegemony of western scholarship - i.e., the production, publication, distribution and consumption of information and ideas. Marginal or not, this writing has political effects and implications beyond the immediate feminist or disciplinary audience. One such significant effect of the dominant 'representations' of western feminism is its conflation with imperialism in the eyes of particular third-world women" (64). In the case of HTD and its use in a house intended for CSE, the third-world women are "poor" women.

I do not think the founders and helpers of HOPE House would agree with me. The helpers of HOPE House proudly set themselves apart from the Christian moralizers such as the Salvation Army or the International Justice Mission (an international trafficking rescue group). The IJM is based on the idea that "trafficked women [require]

a radical break with the past affected by the liberator" (Govindan 2013). But HOPE House, while not a rescue mission, shares a similar approach to this notion of a radical break through their creation of a cloister in which the women are to be saved by "maternal" forces. In this way, HOPE House is quite similar to the moralizing, conversion based Christian missions in that the moments of abjection of the victim/survivor-subjects are ignored and avoided (Govindan 2013). However, moments of abjection, past, present and future, are part of all lives, manifesting in different ways. Would it not be better to cease moralizing abjection away and instead face it head on and embrace it? For the residents? Yes. To obtain money from the general public? No.

The strategic use of HTD, however, is not feminist. It is not radical-feminist nor is it intersectional-feminist. Due to the underlying epistemes of HTD, one of which is that a (childlike) woman's place is in her home, HTD is not a good fit for feminist projects. In the safe house, I recommend greater attention be paid to the realities of what lies outside those doors – harm reduction where individual physical strength (not middle class version of "health") and decision-making lie at the core of the structure of the house, via its rules and interactions. Additionally, I recommend that sociology be at the core of resident-led programming for residents – where issues related to power and dominance regarding race, social class and gender are regularly unpacked, discussed and analyzed. Further, I suggest that residents should always have representation on the board and in committees. The house should act less like an arm of the state (or church), thereby doing the patriarchal bidding of the state (or church), and act more as a site of equal power relations.

As the quote at the beginning of this chapter states, "[b]eing disappeared is worse than being stigmatized" (Agustin 2003: 98). The gala, and its overwhelming use of HTD to get money erased the experiences of the present residents and also the knowledge base built by the helpers. Their project wasn't "good enough" so they had to sell what the public was buying. And instead, what the gala did was push falsehoods, further hurting their mission.

It is possible to assist trafficked individuals and not engage in HTD. For example, in interviewing a leader of an organization that does just that, my informant expressed that the clients they serve are seldom looking for housing but if they are, they do not place women, men or children into a group home for "trafficked" people but rather find "safer" places for them to live and deal with their life circumstances: places where the survivors can maintain their agency and their dignity. Instead of relying on HTD, organizations should counter the traditionally gendered epistemic bedrock of HTD.

The Power in Episteme(s)

The uniting arc of this dissertation, between HTD in theory, in practice, as invisible, and as public face, is in the shared episteme of patriarchal gender. As I note in chapter one, the two related aspects of the episteme are a reliance on women as naturally victims (and not agents) as well as a reliance on the private spaces of home as the best place to keep women safe. Further, I assert in chapter two that any organization or group, feminist included, which unquestionably utilizes HTD and the unspoken epistemes undergirding the discourse are playing directly into a un-emancipatory, non-radical, non-revolutionary version of traditional gender norms rendering women as objects which

incidentally is theorized by feminists to be the first or at least most important step to engaging further violence upon the objectified human.

As a gender scholar and a feminist, I assert that it is through a greater understanding of the epistemes, which are the foundation to discourse and furthermore unite various discourses in our society, that feminism can reignite its quest to understand the macro-level forces which serve to leave women, as a group, disempowered in global society while at the same time allowing space for more voices to enter the discussion. Reflexivity is perhaps the most important element of any activism and as Agustin notes above, the idea is not to stop acting but rather remain reflexive and open to change.

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Appendix A: Methodology

The Field

I first learned of HOPE House via a newspaper article published on it's opening in 2009. Immediately, I attempted to contact the house, but the contact name given in the article did not return my inquiries. I later mentioned the house to a colleague at a local university where I was teaching at the time. She knew another woman who was directly involved with the founding of the house, Carol Brennan. After a phone conversation with Carol on the issue of human trafficking and my research more generally, she recommended I contact the house. At this point, my research was focused on the discourse of human trafficking at and connected to the United Nations.

I first toured HOPE House in the fall of 2010 and sought to contextualize my UN based research with some "real life" field work. Thankfully, the Executive Director, Sister Rose, agreed that my research and a comparison of discourse to lived experiences would be helpful to the cause of anti-trafficking. Once the IRB approved my study, I sought permission from all individuals in the house and consistently reminded them that I was not only volunteering in the space but also observing for my dissertation. In this way, I aimed to maintain informed consent with all individuals in the house on a regular basis.

I observed at the house, as a volunteer, from Spring of 2011 to Spring to 2013. For the first year, I spent approximately 6-12 hours a month (2-4 times a month) as volunteer "supervisor" of the house as well as worked with Sister Rose on identifying and writing for grants. I also attended once monthly development meetings – acting as

secretary and taking notes on meetings. For the second year, I increased my time spent on the development committee to 2 times per month and tried to volunteer with the residents once a month.

Though I was already conducting observations at the United Nations prior to my entry into the House, the meeting I utilize for this dissertation was one that I attended with Sister Marjory. There a was also a regional anti-trafficking coalition that held quarterly meetings. I attended the quarterly meetings and also volunteered on a subcommittee which planned and held an awareness training for social service providers.

Because the UN observations were meant for public consumption, I do not change the names of the speakers. However, for all other people in this dissertation, their names have been changed. The city where the house is held is also not identified. I do this to maintain as much confidentiality as possible.

In addition, I also do not name the nationality of the "international" women in the house. While I recognize that calling them "international" is highly problematic in that it erases their nationality and an important aspect of who they are, I do so, again, to maintain confidentiality.

As Researcher in the Field

One of the challenges of ethnographic research is engaging with biases and reducing one's impact on the field of inquiry. In order to engage with my own biases regarding the topic of sexual commerce, I first conducted research projects on a form of legal sex work: exotic dance. By researching women doing sexual acts in public, and by

maintaining a reflexive component to my field notes in these early projects, I was able to entertain and even address my own feeling of maternal rescue that emerged when I observed public sexual acts. By spending time with exotic dancers, learning about their lives from them as opposed to my imagination, I also was able to expand my understanding of sexual commerce more generally. Hence, by the time I began my study of sex trafficking, I was aware of how my social class, race, education and gender combined in my perceptions of the issue. Further, a professor early on in my career challenged some assumptions I'd made about human trafficking and sex work more generally and this challenge, though uncomfortable at the time, proved incredibly fruitful for me once I entered the field. Additionally, prior to entering the field, I always write down every possible assumption I have regarding what I will see and experience in a site of observation. In this way, I am able to then start looking for things that do not fit my assumptions.

It is impossible to reduce one's impact on their social field 100%, especially when one also needs to seek informed consent from the individuals they are observing. Thus, I sought to establish myself as an overt researcher; everyone I encountered and took notes on knew I was a researcher. However, as a potential volunteer, certain assumptions were made of me that I only clarified if directly asked. For example, I found that the discourse was so ingrained in the lives of the women I worked with, it did not occur to ask me if I was an abolitionist or a sex worker ally. Indeed, I am not an abolitionist and would consider myself closer to a sex worker ally. By not calling attention to this fact and also by maintaining a respect for the founders, staff and their dedication to their work as well

as the structural limitations of their actions, I was able to minimize my biases of their approach to the issue, instead engaging with their actions critically while staying critical of my own actions as well.

In order to not impact the field, however, when I acted as a volunteer, I attempted to act as a member of HOPE House (for the most part). One way I did this was by writing grant applications using the language of the house. I did not represent the house in a way other than how the founders and staff would do so. Another way I did this is that when I went into other spaces as a representative of HOPE House, I also presented myself in a way that fit with the mission of HOPE House. I could not always act as a member of HOPE House however. One way I challenged house norms was by not directly handing medication to the residents and by not acting as a "supervisor" when staff were not present.

Extracting Data

Upon finishing my observations for the day, I would immediately go to a place where I could write detailed jottings or field notes if time permitted. If I could not write field notes immediately following my time in the field, I would utilize my "jottings" to jog my memory and within 48 hours of being in the field, I would write my field notes. As a rule of thumb, I attempted to write two hours of notes for every one hour in the field. My field notes would consist of a "play by play," chronological accounting my time in the field followed by a short analysis section where I ruminated on things that stood out, things that were absent, and new experiences. For the first year, I took all of

my notes on a laptop computer. For the second year, following a car accident, I hand wrote my notes into notebooks as they were lighter to carry than a computer. Thus, my analysis was done partially with ATLAS.ti, a qualitative coding program but I then had to switch my coding to color coding my actual notebook notes. I drew my codes directly from the elements of discourse I outline in chapter one, and looked for general themes as well.

The Role of Reflexivity

Doing this ethnography was an uncomfortable experience. I developed some close relationships with women who I present in critical ways in this document. Critical, however, is not the same as hateful, and I had to constantly remind myself of the structural influences which impacted the "helpers" as much as the residents. Still, I was extremely uncomfortable sharing some of the details in this dissertation for I continue to care deeply for, and am indebted to, all the women of HOPE House.

Mostly, I found that I was as much a part of my culture as others I was observing. For example, more than once, I found that activist groups' conversations about human trafficking would morph into a detailing of sex slavery and I, along with the rest of the group, would follow a line of thought like that for a long time before someone would bring us back to reality and to task. I actually liked that I was susceptible to the titillating hot button issue – it served as a reminder that I should stay humble in my approach to how I analyze others doing the same thing.

When I started this project, I was looking for a discourse I thought was everywhere. I did not expect HTD to disappear when I entered into a safe house for trafficked women. I also did not expect the founders of the house to be as reflexive as they were, either. For example, in discussing her work on the creation of a John's School, Sister Marjory noted to me that it actually really was disappointing to be working on something that would reduce the punishment for men who were arrested for purchasing sex. However, her belief that demand drives the sales led her to focus on the demand.

As I reflect back on this project, mostly I am humbled that such a complicated and driven group of women, helpers and residents, allowed me into their homes and into their passions. This is why I have dedicated this dissertation to the women of HOPE House, because they taught me about their space and their actions and for that, I am endlessly grateful.